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THE GREEK LITERATURE OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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The Greek Literature of the Early Christian Church

BY

ABBÉ G. BARDY

TRANSLATED BY

MOTHER MARY REGINALD, O.P.

Senior Novitiate

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THE GREEK LITERATURE OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GREEK CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

When, towards the end of the first century, the last witnesses of Our Lord's life had left this world, the Church already possessed a literature. This literature has a character of its own, which distinguishes it from all others, and if we were not afraid of appearing paradoxical, we should be tempted to say that its distinctive mark is that of being as little literary as possible. The first Christian books do not follow the rules of poetic art or professional rhetoric. Such narrow limits are not for them.

Using no classic formulas, troubling themselves not at all about the harmony of their periods or the elegance of their terms, their authors have refused to put new wine into old bottles or to patch old garments with new cloth. In order to recall

the life of Our Lord and to spread His teaching amongst the communities which they had established almost everywhere along the shores of the Mediterranean, it was sufficient for them to speak as souls who believed, and to follow the inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

For the Catholic historian cannot forget that the most ancient examples of Christian literature are chiefly inspired books, which are regarded by the Church as the work of God. Even if, viewing them in their human aspect, as literature, he does not expressly reflect on their divine origin, he must be on his guard against ignoring or forgetting it, and must bring to the study of these books the respect that is due to what is sacred.

It is not necessary to dwell for long here on the collection of books that constitute the New Testament, but it is impossible not to recall their essential traits, because it is these which determine to some extent the direction of all Christian literature.

Before He left the earth Our Lord did not command His Apostles and disciples to compose books. He Himself wrote nothing, and His doctrine was to be chiefly propagated by oral teaching. But the spoken word is not wholly sufficient: the Apostles were very soon obliged to take pen in hand and inscribe on papyrus the teaching and counsels they wished to give to their communities.

The most ancient of these writings are the epistles, or letters; those, above all, of Saint Paul; then those of Saint Peter, Saint James, Saint Jude and Saint John. When they were obliged to leave the Churches they had founded, or in which they were interested, the Apostles were anxious to remain in communication with them; they had to solve new

problems which arose almost daily in the practice of the Christian life; they had to insist especially on certain points of their teaching, particularly those which were disputed, criticized or combated: the uselessness of circumcision, the reality of the Resurrection, and many others. Addressed for the most part to communities rather than to individuals, they borrow from the circumstances in which they were written, a certain tone of solemnity: the letter to the Romans, for instance, reads like a veritable treatise on Justification. Nevertheless they are true letters, full of precise details for those to whom they are addressed, and adapted to the particular requirements for which they were composed. The title of *Epistles*, which we usually give them, must not make us forget their essential character of spontaneity.

To the Letters were added the Narratives. As the years passed and the number of Our Lord's immediate disciples diminished, the faithful manifested a desire to preserve an exact recollection of all that JESUS had done and taught. Saint Matthew appears to have been the first to write in Aramaic his recollections of his Master; this first Gospel has left scarcely any perceptible trace in later literature. After him others wrote, either what they had been told, or what they had personally known of the life of Our Lord. Thus, as we learn from the prologue of Saint Luke, many Churches were put in possession of more or less complete sketches, most of them anonymous, which were afterwards collected and put in order, and as early as, or before the year 70, the Greek Gospel of Saint Matthew, those of Saint Mark, Saint Peter's interpreter, and Saint Luke, the disciple of Saint Paul, were delivered to

the zealous communities. These ordered narratives, thanks to their intrinsic qualities, and, above all, to the authority of the writers which guaranteed their divine inspiration, soon cast into the shade the more or less unskilful attempts of their forerunners.

Besides his Gospel, Saint Luke has given us an account of the life of the early Church. *The Acts of the Apostles* are the logical continuation of the Gospel, and are connected with it by the first words of the Introduction. The writer does not here attempt to give a complete history of the Apostles' preaching. He is content to set down in order what he knew, either from authorized documents or recitals, or from his own personal experience during the course of his journeys with Saint Paul. These materials were amply sufficient to manifest unmistakably the guidance of God in the infant Church. The heathens who were converted to the new Faith needed above all things to know the broad lines of the life of JESUS: His miracles, His teaching, His Passion, His Resurrection: they needed also to understand how the Church had grown, from its birth in Jerusalem, even to Rome, and what had been the work of Saint Paul, the founder of most of the great Christian communities in the Greek world. These things are excellently described by Saint Luke, in a clear and correct style, revealing the personality of the Antiochene physician, whom Saint Paul had made his disciple. But these accounts are lessons rather than learned writings.

Saint John, the last Apostle to remain on earth, would not die till he, too, had borne his testimony. During the course of long years he had devoutly meditated on his Master's teaching: he owed it both to himself and to his Churches in Asia Minor

to leave in writing the faithful portrait of Jesus, whose image he knew so well, and whose features time had been unable to efface from his memory. He is a witness who knows that his testimony is true: to the heretical teachers who sow trouble in the souls of the faithful, and who, in the last years of the first century, multiplied false pictures of the Saviour, he opposes his own recollections. He proclaims "that which was from the beginning," that which he had heard, that which he had seen with his eyes and his hands had handled, of the Word of Life.

The Gospel of Saint John, a book unique of its kind, completes the Synoptic Gospels, but, like them, it is not a history in the strict literary sense of the term.

The Apocalypse, also the work of Saint John, concludes the New Testament: this wonderful Revelation of the last days of the world seems to be a sealed book to many present-day readers. It was probably not so at the time of its publication. The minds of the early Christians were better fitted than are ours to receive these striking images, which enabled them to understand something of the grandeur of God's judgments; and, whilst thinking of future generations, Saint John had chiefly in mind the instruction of the faithful of his own time when describing the marvellous visions he had beheld in the Island of Patmos. In spite of its obscurities, the Apocalypse has always been regarded by the Church as a Sacred Book. It closes the Revelation.

Letters; accounts of the Life of the Lord and the preaching of His first Apostles; a prophecy on

the end of the world; such were the writings that the Christian Church possessed as her own about the year 100. None of these works were written with any literary aim, properly so-called, and they were unknown to the great ones of Athens or Rome. Had they known they would have despised them, so greatly would they have been struck by the incorrectness of their style and their simplicity of language. But the Church guarded these books as precious treasures, all the more carefully that they were to her a sacred heritage. She knew that their authors had been inspired by the Holy Ghost Himself: in them she found her Divine Founder still living, and learned the combats and sufferings of the first preachers of the Gospel. She there heard the resounding voice of Saint Paul, always ringing with ardour and zeal; and if certain details in the Apostles' letters had ceased to apply to an altered situation, it was easy to discover in these books durable matter that made the reading of them always beneficial.

All these reasons, and, above all, the knowledge of their divine inspiration, explain the respect with which Christianity immediately surrounded the Books of the New Testament. At the end of the first and beginning of the second century we find them cited as "the Scriptures," on an equality with the Books of the Old Testament.

As the heir of Judaic traditions, the Church had in fact carefully preserved the Sacred Books received by the Synagogue. In the prophecies, which JESUS had fulfilled in His own person, she found the best arguments in favour of His divine mission. In the narratives of the historical books she delighted to discover the elements of a

tradition, thanks to which she could connect herself with the ancestors of Israel, and mount without interruption to the creation of the world. The Bible was the Church's Sacred Book, as it was that of the Synagogue: JESUS and His Apostles had read and commented on it, and the Church continued to read and comment it with all respect. But the Jews rested content with the Bible, or Old Testament, whilst the Christians could thenceforth add their own Books to those they had received from the Synagogue. To the alliance concluded by Moses between Jehovah and Israel had succeeded the alliance sealed by the Blood of JESUS; and it was just that this New Covenant should possess its writings, to which the Faithful could go and learn the Truth.

From the end of the first or beginning of the second century the Books of the Apostles and Disciples had thus become objects of a special veneration; together with the Jewish Books they formed the essential portion of the Church's library. How, in the course of the following centuries, this library gradually developed, it is precisely the work of the historian of ancient Christian literature to examine.

That there should exist a Christian literature at all is rather an unexpected fact. Christianity, as a traditional religion, transmitted by episcopal succession, has never attached much importance to books, save in the case of the inspired writings already described; for the Church of Christ the book has always been the auxiliary or supplement of the word. The Christians wrote when they were prevented from speaking, or when their oral preaching could not reach the communities whom

they would fain convert. They therefore did not cultivate a strictly literary style, epic poetry or tragedy; the only poetry of theirs which we possess is chiefly that required for the celebration of the Liturgy; even history they regarded as a form of apologetic argument. On the other hand, they wrote letters, they multiplied lectures, sermons or homilies, rather than rhetorical works: they drew up *Apologies* against the heathens, Jews and pagans; they composed statements of the Faith and morals of Christianity, and explained, more or less at length, the Sacred Books on which their Faith rested.

Thus there was gradually formed an essentially practical literature. All these books are Acts and tend to edification. Nothing is there sacrificed to the vanity of style, to fine language, to the harmony of nicely balanced phrases. And as these early Christian writers belonged for the most part to the less-educated classes, their works are written in homely language, often full of faults and incorrect grammar, of rhetorical heresies, against which philosophers and literary men strongly protest. But such protestations are matters of indifference to the writers: they do not seek to please; they desire to instruct and to raise, and in this they succeed. Often, too, they end by pleasing those who are willing to give attention to their works. For, though defective in the learned and artificial eloquence of the schools, these writings are full of the eloquence of the heart, the result of faith, zeal and enthusiasm. Their books are the expression of their souls—and of what souls! In these early Christian writings we meet living men, whom we hear and see, acting before us. The

letters of the first and second centuries show us in detail all the tribulations, the cares, the hopes of the faithful of those times. The apologetic works, far from being formal treatises, suitable for all times and countries, limit themselves to the refutation of actual objections, or to prove a decisive argument, and the writers are not afraid to put themselves forward, to speak of themselves in the first person, and thus to show that they seek not to please, but to convince. The sermons are addressed to living audiences; they introduce us freely to the communities of Alexandria and Cæsarea, and do not fear to unveil their weaknesses. Whilst pagan literature was dying out in banal sterilities and exhausting itself in the composition of empty works, this new literature was growing up, wholly spontaneous, and powerful from its very spontaneity.

No doubt, with the gradual development of the Church and her extension amongst the higher classes of society, her teachers learned to speak and write with greater elegance. By the third century some at least among them understood the stronger force of an argument when clothed in harmonious words. In the fourth century many of her greatest bishops were the disciples of orators, and they brought to the pulpit the result of their studies in the schools. Thenceforth Christianity had her own scholars—*literati*—with a pure vocabulary and irreproachable grammar. But these scholars never sacrificed matter to form. They wrote when they had something to teach, and wasted no time in merely pleasing the eye or ear. Thus they realized the perfection of literary art: as an admirable garment, a flexible and abundant

vocabulary, enriched by the experience of former centuries, enabled them to explain without effort the most difficult ideas of Christian metaphysics, and served them to express the sentiments that filled their souls. Saint Basil, Saint Gregory of Nazianzen, Saint John Chrysostom should not only be placed amongst the greatest Christians that history has known; they are also worthy to stand in the first rank of a list of the great writers of whom humanity is proud.

But descent is often near the summit, and with the fifth century a period of decline in Christian literature begins. The reason for this may be found in the fact that this literature gradually lost that which gave it its force and value. It became artificial and empty. The orators and preachers, instead of concerning themselves with the souls whom they had to convert, were preoccupied with the desire of satisfying the curiosity of their hearers by an effective phrase, a play upon words, a striking point, or the heavy artillery of a superficial rhetoric. The exegetists strove no more to understand the Scriptures and to adapt their sacred teaching to the actual needs of souls: they contented themselves with gathering here and there the interpretations of their predecessors, and forging chains formed of detached portions from every source. The theologians themselves employed no other method in the refutation of heresies: tradition replaced reason. Copious anthologies of patristic testimonies were compiled, and saved the masters the trouble of reflecting personally on the fecundity of the Divine teaching. Thenceforth pseudo-epigraphy worked terrible ravages. The names of former masters became objects of such veneration that

they were used to cover all sorts of writings; sermons, treatises, documents and what not. To the Apollinarist forgeries succeeded the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, which, from their first appearance, exercised an influence that increased throughout the Middle Ages.

As long as the Christian teachers did not seek to please they wrote works full of interest, because they were the outpourings of the best that was in them, but from the day when they yielded to the desire of surprising their auditors, or of realizing a so-called artistic ideal, they fell into the pit of platitude and sterility. Thus early Christian literature has no value except in so far as it remains indifferent to literature; a rather paradoxical statement, but one that is profoundly true. That which gives it beauty is the closeness of the touch that for centuries it kept with the life of which it was the natural expression. When that life lost something of its fecundity, or when the *literati* replaced the bishops and directors of souls in public esteem, we may say that a new period began, the commencement of which very nearly corresponds with the reign of Justinian.

The history of the Greek Christian literature that we now have to study, developed between the end of the first and the middle of the sixth century, and divides itself naturally into three periods. The first, up to the peace of the Church, is that of its origin or beginnings. Letters are written; episcopal catalogues and chronicles are edited; epitaphs are engraved; hymns are sung: a little later apologies are composed and heresies refuted; there is an attempt to present the Church's dogma and morals in a coherent form. The writers were often little

educated, and even those who, before their conversion, had attended the heathen schools had to express ideas that were perfectly new to them in a badly-adapted tongue, full of vulgarisms and foreign idioms—such, in fact, as the first translators of the Greek Bible and the authors of the New Testament had employed. They had, therefore, with great effort, to create a language capable of expressing Divine Revelation. And they succeeded. Their books, which can scarcely be called books, in spite of the centuries that have since elapsed, reveal something of that profound Faith to which they bear witness.

The strong current of this new-born literature flowed over the ancient world, but before long certain centres were formed whence its influence radiated and returned. Rome was the oldest and the most important; and it is a remarkable fact that, until the first years of the third century, Roman Christianity continued to speak and write in Greek. The Roman writings, it is true, bear an indelible mark of their origin; the tone of command, the direction of all problems towards a practical solution, the firmness tempered by prudence, all display the genius of Rome. But they are none the less Greek, by their language and by certain trends of thought, and they thus maintain an admirable equilibrium, which one vainly seeks elsewhere. It is therefore a most important fact, for both literary and general history, that, about the year 100, a series of Latin works appeared. This revolution, begun in Africa, quickly spread to Rome and Gaul: soon the Sacred Books were translated from Greek into Latin, as were also other Christian books that were held in special veneration, and those

masters, who, like Saint Hippolytus, persisted in teaching in Greek, were soon dismissed from a Church that no longer understood them.

Whilst Rome was thus deserting Hellenism, and Roman Christianity was turning to the West, other centres of Eastern culture had arisen. The most brilliant of these in the second century was that in Asia Minor, formerly evangelized by Saint Paul, and for a long time sanctified by the venerable old age of Saint John. A strong religious life animated the ancient Churches of Smyrna, Ephesus, Hierapolis, Sardis, Tralles, Laodicea, and many others. But this life was not always healthy, and heresies often troubled the communities—Judæo-Christian Docetism, Montanism, and, later, Novatianism. But the defenders of the orthodox Faith rose up in greater numbers and strength: many of these are only known to us by their names, but those whose works still remain are personages of the highest rank, both as bishops and writers.

Antioch and Syria must next be noticed: it is there that Christianity was born, and whence it spread to the conquest of the world. These regions, however, do not seem, until the fourth century, to have exercised as considerable an influence as we might have expected. The taking of Jerusalem, above all its destruction by Hadrian, the controversies raised in Palestine on the question of Jewish observances, all these suffice to explain the persistent weakness of Christianity in the country of its origin. At Antioch the same causes did not exist, but there were others as powerful, the chief of which was the levity of the Antiochenes, and their indifference to the great religious problems. It is not until about the end of the third century that

Antioch begins to hold a foremost place in Christian thought.

Egypt entered late into the domain of literature, and, curiously enough, her entrance was made by the Gnostic doctors who taught in Alexandria during the first half of the second century. But about the year 200 a great light arose. Two men, Clement and Origen, made of the School of Alexandria a veritable torch of the Church. Their influence, particularly that of Origen, lasted for a long time, in the midst of many vicissitudes.

Such as we have drawn them in broad outline, the first three centuries were a period of formation for Greek Christian literature. The hundred years or so between the Edict of Milan and the death of Saint John Chrysostom marked its apogee. Everything contributed to make of this period a truly golden age. Thanks to the peace that was signed between Christianity and the Empire, the faithful and their leaders had leisure to dwell on spiritual things. Paganism ceased to be a terror, and the younger Christians were not afraid to seek in classical literature and the great works of antiquity the secret of Beauty. The language, softened and made flexible by three centuries of effort and study, was now fitted to express without difficulty the complications of theological teaching; and in the hands of the disciples of the great Oriental bishops it became an admirable instrument of conquest. At the same time the fight against heresy obliged the doctors to perfect unceasingly their vocabulary, to work constantly at their style, in order to discover the best formulas for the unmasking of error. The necessities of the combat also prevented the writers and orators from adopting an artificial

and barren style; they had, as it were, to renew themselves perpetually, and to give to their explanations the exact form that was required by the needs of the moment. The union of all these elements explain the wonderful development of Christian literature, down to the fourth century.

We shall have to study separately these three provinces, whose individuality is manifest from the beginning of the Church's history. Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor are the centres round which circle the other regions of the East. Alexandria is the Promised Land of Allegory. When her writers interpret the Sacred Books they seek instinctively their spiritual meaning. The mystical spirit of the Egyptians dreads nothing so much as literal explanations; it is a spirit that rises without effort to the Divine, and is at home in the supernatural world. The Antiochenes, on the contrary, prefer the realities of history; they explain the Old and New Testaments in their literal sense. The Christ whom they honour is the Son of Mary, who dwelt amongst us, rather than the Divine Word, born from all eternity. It was at Antioch that Nestorianism developed, whilst Monophysitism had no more faithful adherents than the Christians of Alexandria. These opposing tendencies are more or less strongly expressed in the literature: Saint Athanasius, Didymus, and Saint Cyril are the spokesmen of the Alexandrians: Diodorus, Theodore, Saint John Chrysostom and Theodoret represent the rival School of Antioch.

Palestine formed a bond of union between these two provinces. Her writers sometimes represented the School of Alexandria, sometimes that of Antioch. During the third century, owing to Origen's long

sojourn in Cæsarea, they were drawn towards Egypt, but in the fourth century they sought their spiritual guidance from Antioch, and it is with the latter school that we prefer to place them.

In Asia Minor the ancient Churches of Smyrna, Ephesus and Laodicea ceased to hold their former pre-eminence. Far-off Cappadocia took their place. From this province came the advocates of Arianism, episcopal adventurers, rhetoricians without pupils: even the Western Churches were sometimes obliged to receive these strange persons. But from this same province came the great bishops who completed the work of the Council of Nicæa, and whose sermons, letters, theological treatises, and even poems are perhaps the most finished works of Christian literature. Formed as they were in the most illustrious schools of classical antiquity, whilst drinking from the purest sources of Catholic tradition, Saint Basil, Saint Gregory Nazianzen, Saint Gregory of Nyssa, Saint Amphilochius of Iconium, not to mention others, raised high the torch of Truth that had been transmitted to them by their predecessors. They were truly the light of their time, and it is thanks to them that Hellenism gave to the world works of an eternal value.

When their work was finished, decline, slow but inevitable, set in. It is true that even in the fifth and sixth centuries we find great names and great writings. The East was more fortunate than the West in escaping the scourge of the barbarian invasions that destroyed all previous civilization. But men of the first rank are rare. The vitality of the Church gradually decayed, as she accepted, or at least submitted to the domination of the Empire. The great Christian writers of this last

period are too often insubordinate and rebellious; and their undoubted eloquence is employed to resist the injunctions of a power that claims to govern the conscience. Some of these writers are not orthodox: heresy herself possesses men of talent and faith. But the last great names in early Christian literature are those of faithful Catholics, such as Leontius of Byzantium, Maximus the Confessor, Saint John Damascene. These names belong to the history of Byzantine literature, and to cite them shows the continuity of that life of which we cannot clearly distinguish the stages without destroying it.

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Most of the works of Greek Christian literature are to be found in the immense collection edited by J. P. Migne, *Patrologiæ cursus completus: series græca* (Paris, 1857-1866). The Greek Patrology takes up 162 volumes, and extends to the Council of Florence (1439). A volume of Indexes has been drawn up and published by F. Cavallera (Paris, 1912).

The Academy of Berlin undertook, at the end of the nineteenth century, a critical edition of a certain number of Greek Fathers, under the rather inexact and incomplete title of *Die griechischen christlichen Schrifsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Leipsic, 1897 ss.). Thirty-four volumes have so far appeared. A popular edition of studies, with introductions, notes, indexes and a French translation, was begun under the direction of M. M. Hemmer and Lejay: *Textes et documents pour l'étude historique du Christianisme* (Paris, 1904 ss.). This collection, of which eighteen volumes have been published, seems unfortunately to have been interrupted. The collection of G. Budé was, according to his programme, to have included the principal works of the Greek Fathers: none of these have yet been published.

Many important texts may also be found in the following collections: R. Graffin and F. Nau, *Patrologia orientalis* (Paris, 1903 ss.); O. von Gebhardt, A. Harnack and C. Schmidt, *Texte und Untersuchungen*

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Amongst the older authors who may be consulted with profit are :

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The most recent or accessible authors seem to be :

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It is scarcely necessary to add that in order to understand Christian literature it is necessary to study the history of the Church and of her dogmas. Therefore it would be well to consult the following :

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FIRST PERIOD

THE BEGINNINGS

(ABOUT 97-313)

GENERAL SUMMARY

It is scarcely possible to write a history of Christian literature up to the peace of the Church, or at least to the end of the second century. Very few documents belonging to this period are extant. Eusebius of Cæsarea mentions many names of which we know nothing more. No doubt fortunate discoveries increase from time to time the treasures of these first Christian writings, but they are too rare to enable us to fill up the gaps in our knowledge.

On the other hand the primitive literature of Christianity is essentially pragmatic, and everywhere, in the second century, the same needs have given birth to works of the same kind. We find in all the Churches Letters, Apologies, Chronicles, more or less legendary accounts of the Life of Christ and the Apostles. And the Christian teachers of those days were great travellers: Saint Justin, who was born in Neapolis in Palestine, lived for some time in Ephesus before settling in Rome. Tatian was born and died in Mesopotamia, but passed a great part of his life in Antioch and Rome. The Egyptian Valentinus, the Syrian Cerdo, the Asiatic Polycarp, Marcion of Sinope, Theodotus of Byzantium, and many others, went to Rome and made longer or shorter sojourns there. Origen

of Alexandria stayed for a long time at Cæsarea in Palestine; we find him also at Sidon, Tyre, Bostra, Antioch, Cæsarea of Cappadocia, Nicomedia, Athens, Nicopolis, Rome and elsewhere. Julius the African, originally of Emmaus in Palestine, was in Rome, Edessa and Alexandria. And these examples might be indefinitely multiplied.

Any account which takes the different provinces for its centre must therefore be to a certain extent artificial, and its divisions more or less arbitrary. Nevertheless the great Christian provinces retain their own physiognomy: the Roman writers are distinguished by their practical spirit and sense of responsibility; the Egyptians are idealists; and the Asiatics set themselves to transmit the tradition they have received from the Apostles and combat heresy with indomitable resolution. The Syrians and Palestinians are chroniclers and historians. The details must correct what is too absolute in a general review, but as it is necessary to divide our matter in order to explain it more clearly, the division into provinces, even in the earliest period, will be of use.

CHAPTER I

ROME AND GAUL

Saint Clement. Hermas. *Secunda Clementis.* Saint Justin. Saint Irenæus. Caius. Hippolytus. Other writers.

We shall first study the beginnings of Greek Christian literature in the West.

Indeed, up to about the year 200, the Western Christians, at any rate those of Rome and Gaul, spoke and wrote in Greek. For many of them, who were of Oriental origin, Greek was their national tongue, which they spoke familiarly, and it was natural that they should cling to its use; whilst for all, even those of Latin race, it was at least the traditional language, in which the Apostles had declared the good tidings of salvation, in which Saint Paul had written his Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians, to Philemon and the Ephesians, and that in which Saint Mark had composed his Gospel. The Church was bound to preserve a language already consecrated by such sacred recollections. It was also in Greek that the learned members of Roman society expressed themselves, and when the Christians desired to gain access to them, it was necessary to use the language familiar to the philosopher Epictetus or the Emperor Marcus Aurelius.

Senior Novitiate

Saint Clement.—The most ancient of these Roman writers in Greek is the Pope Saint Clement, the third successor of Saint Peter and fourth Bishop of Rome. We know scarcely anything of his life, save that he may have been of Jewish origin, and was probably a freedman or the son of a freedman belonging to the family of Flavius. He seems to have been well educated, and he governed the Christian Community of Rome during the reign of Domitian, or, more exactly, during the last years of the first century. He was a remarkable man, firm and moderate, with a strong sense of responsibility, and he knew how to speak as a master, when necessary.

We possess but one authentic letter by Saint Clement, addressed, about the year 97, to the Church of Corinth, which had been led by a few violent spirits into a sedition against its rulers, and Clement felt obliged to intervene. The Epistle is written in the name of the Church of Rome, but has a strong personal tone, and pleads for peace and unity. The writer demonstrates at length the dangers of a schism provoked by envy, and insists on the blessings of order and union. His style is restrained and dignified, and the tone of authority has caused later writers to describe this noble Epistle as "the Epiphany of the Roman Primacy." After recalling the divine origin of the Hierarchy and imploring the disturbers to submit to their lawful rulers, he concludes with a long Eucharistic prayer, a beautiful monument of Christian piety, where are already foreshadowed the sobriety, elevation and grandeur of the Roman Liturgy.

This Epistle soon became famous and was for long read publicly in the different Churches, whilst

transcribers of the Holy Scriptures copied it out at the end of the inspired Books.

This celebrity was an encouragement to forgers, and, under the name of Clement there appeared, between the second and fifth centuries, a whole literature of a very varied character. (1) Twenty books of *Homilies*, preceded by so-called Letters of Saints Peter, James and Clement, intended to guarantee their orthodoxy. These *Homilies*, under colour of reproducing the teaching of Saint Peter during his controversies with Simon Magus, reveal a decided Judæo-Christian doctrine. (2) The *Recognitions*, a pure romance of adventure, in which Saint Clement, the hero, in the course of some extraordinary journeys, discovers his father, mother and brothers, whom he had lost. (3) Two *Epistles to Virgins*, full of moral counsels. (4) *The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, by Clement;* a disciplinary and liturgical work, where the Apostles are shown explaining to their disciples the rules to be followed in the organization of the Church. This Pseudo-Clementine Literature contains many different elements. The *Homilies* and the *Recognitions* are independent compositions, both collected in the fourth century from older works, the original of which may have been Roman, dating from about 200. The *Letters to Virgins* are from Syria and probably written in the third century. As to the *Constitutions*, also originating in Syria, they did not receive a definitive form till about the year 400. It was only the powerful name of Clement that gave to these writings an apparent unity, as it alone explains the celebrity they enjoyed during the whole of Christian antiquity.

Hermas.—It is now almost universally believed among scholars that Hermas was the brother of Pope Pius I, who governed the Church of Rome from 140 to about 150, and that he was the author of a long composition called *Pastor*—"the Shepherd." This very curious work is a sort of Apocalypse, intended to preach repentance and to announce to sinners a single chance of restoration after a fall: this differs from Baptism and is spoken of as something new. It receives its name from the chief personage in the story, "the Angel of Repentance," who appears to Hermas in the guise of a shepherd.

The author himself, as manifested in his book, is a perfect type of the average Christian. He is a layman, and here and there shows some distrust of ambitious bishops. He writes in order to give his contemporaries the benefit of the revelations that had been granted to him, but these revelations themselves are simple enough. They are far from wearing the terrible and mysterious character of those in Saint John's Apocalypse: their object is simply to show clearly the necessity of conversion, and they represent the Church as a tower in course of construction; the stones, which are carefully examined by the builders, represent the faithful. Or, again, the Church is a tree with more or less flowering and fruitful branches. There is nothing really mysterious, and "the Shepherd" carefully explains to Hermas every detail of his parables, so that he may in turn instruct his brethren.

Of a not very cultivated mind, a poor theologian and a bad writer, Hermas has nothing about him to attract the literary. But he interests by his frankness and simplicity. He gives the impression

of a sincerely honest man, who, without being a saint, strives to fulfil the duties of a Christian. And his book throws a wonderfully clear light on the state of the Roman Church during the first half of the second century. We behold a large community, forced to live under the constant threat of persecution, faithful as a whole to the solemn obligations of their baptism, in spite of inevitable falls of frailty. We see, also, the gradual decline to mediocrity amongst the early Christians, and even at times the mournful spectacle of apostasies and public sins, causing Hermas to despair. He therefore relates his visions in order that his brethren may return to the practice of virtue. Is not the end of the world approaching? Is not the building of the Church nearly finished? And will not sinners profit by these great and solemn warnings, and do penance?

Such as it was, the book had a great success. The Christians of the second century loved this mild and smiling moralist, who shared their own anxieties, and they were interested in parables and similitudes of such transparent mystery. Egypt, above all, warmly welcomed the *Pastor*, and copies were sometimes made of it in the manuscripts of Holy Scripture. Even in Rome it was not long before a Latin translation was made for those of the faithful who did not know Greek. Few works of Christian antiquity have enjoyed such a reputation or exercised such a lasting influence.

Secunda Clementis.—Almost contemporaneous with Hermas is the unknown author of the Homily that is habitually quoted as *The Second Epistle of Saint Clement to the Corinthians*. This title

contains as many errors as words, for it is certain that we have here no letter, that the Corinthians have nothing to do with it, and that the author was not Saint Clement. It has been conjectured, not without probability, that Pope Saint Soter (about 166-175), was its author. However that may be, the Homily is without doubt Roman, and dates from the middle of the second century. It is the oldest specimen we possess of Christian preaching; its special interest therefore consists in its marking a date in history. Besides this, it makes agreeable reading: the author is neither a stylist nor a philosopher; he writes, or, rather, speaks simply, without seeking over much to put his ideas in order, and he sometimes falls into banality. But he gives one the impression throughout of an upright and serious soul. He teaches an austere morality founded on purity of heart and body, aided by arguments occasionally borrowed from the Apocryphal Gospels. No doubt his hearers profited by his words, as they considered the sermon worthy of being preserved in writing.

Saint Justin.—The writers of whom we have been hitherto speaking were all authentic Romans, but the apologist, Saint Justin, came from the East. He was born, at the beginning of the second century, at Flavia Neapolis, in Samaria, of a pagan family. He lived for some time at Ephesus, but taught for a longer period in Rome; it was in Rome that he suffered martyrdom, about the year 165, and we may lawfully rank him in this history amongst Roman writers.

There are few men who excite our sympathy more than does Saint Justin. Before his conversion he

had long sought for the Truth amongst the pagan philosophers, and from this search he gained an immense admiration for the noble doctrines of Hellenism. But they did not satisfy him, and at last he entered the true Church and became her generous and devoted son, consecrating his whole life to her defence. At Ephesus he disputed with the Jew, Tryphon; in Rome he founded a school in which he taught Christian philosophy. His zeal, perhaps a little naïve, prompted him to address to the Emperor, the Senate and the Roman people a religious *Apology*, which later he completed by an Appendix, under the title of *A Second Apology*. Nothing arrested or disconcerted him. His loyal and optimistic spirit recognized no obstacle. But he was denounced as a Christian, taken before the Roman prefect, Junius Rusticus, and beheaded with six companions. We still possess the authentic Acts of his martyrdom, and they form some of the most touching portions of a beautiful collection.

Saint Justin was a voluminous writer. Eusebius has left a list of his works, and mentions, besides the two *Apologies*, a *Discourse to the Greeks;* another discourse, called *A Refutation;* a *Treatise on the Divine Monarchy;* a *Dialogue with Tryphon.* "and many more." All these are lost with the exception of the two *Apologies* and the *Dialogue*. These three treatises serve at least to show us Justin's method and help us to appreciate his teaching. With the Jew Tryphon the apologist disputes the latter's arguments, and proves the truth of Christianity from the Prophets. With the pagans he takes his stand at once on philosophy; after refuting the current objections, he demonstrates how the doctrine of the Divine Word is the final

crowning of all human systems. His knowledge, it is true, is not always equal to his intention. Though he had read the chief works of Plato, and consulted the books of the Old Testament and the *Memoirs of the Apostles*,[1] he had not perfectly assimilated Greek philosophy, and therefore sometimes mistakes the meaning of some doctrine. He also composes and writes badly. Frequent and long digressions interrupt the course of his arguments; promised developments are occasionally looked for in vain, or cut short without reason. His style is heavy and dragging, sometimes incorrect, and his vocabulary monotonous. But in spite of these defects, his writings are read with interest, as those of a soul trembling under the weight of its words.

Such an enterprise as that of Saint Justin deserved perhaps a more skilful workman, for it was nothing less than an attempt to demonstrate clearly the harmonious constancy of Christian doctrine, and to show how Humanity owes to the Divine Word all that it possesses of good and true. It is at least certain that Christianity could not have a more devoted witness and defender than Saint Justin.

His reputation was very great in the early Church and many works of doubtful authenticity have been attributed to him. Procopius of Gaza and Saint John Damascene ascribe to him a treatise, *On the Resurrection*, which is certainly ancient. An *Exhortation* and a *Discourse to the Gentiles*, and the treatise *On the Divine Monarchy* belong to the second or third century. Much more recent are the *Questions and Answers* on various subjects, which seem to be an Antiochean work of the fifth century.

[1] That is, the Gospels, called by Justin "Memoirs."

During the Middle Ages Saint Justin was apparently forgotten. Even his authentic writings were neglected, and have only come down to us in a single manuscript of the fourteenth century.

Saint Irenæus.—During his long sojourn in Rome Saint Justin had many disciples. Of their number were Tatian and Saint Irenæus. The former we shall meet later.

Irenæus was of Asiatic origin. In his youth he had been the disciple of the holy bishop, Saint Polycarp, and of many other elders, whose teaching he had earnestly followed. Then he went to Rome, where he stayed for some time, finally settling at Lyons in Gaul, where he passed the most active and fruitful years of his life.

We hear of him for the first time in the year 177. Lyons was then the seat of a flourishing Christian community, which was attached to Asia Minor by many traditions and counted many Asiatics amongst her faithful. A persecution having decimated this Church, the Lyonnese sent an account of it to their brethren in Asia and Phrygia; their letter, of which Eusebius has preserved the greater portion, and which may have been written by Irenæus himself, is admirable. It is full of deep emotion and describes in touching words the martyrdom of the venerable Bishop Pothinus and the girl-slave, Blandina.

At the time of these martyrdoms Irenæus was sent on a mission to Rome, charged with a letter to Pope Eleutherius pleading for the peace of the Church. When he returned to Lyons he was appointed Bishop, and for twenty-five years fulfilled his episcopal functions with the greatest devotion.

We know that he sent many missionaries to evangelize Gaul, that he intervened actively in the controversies on the date of Easter, and that he strove unceasingly against the Gnostic heresies which were spreading in the valley of the Rhone. His death, of which we know little, took place about the beginning of the third century. Saint Jerome says that he was a martyr, and he is ranked as such in the Church's Calendar.

This great Bishop was a great, or at least, a voluminous writer. Eusebius quotes a letter of his to Florinus, *On the Monarchy, or How God is not the Cause of Evil;* a work *On the Ogdoad*, to the same priest Florinus, probably against the Valentinian Gnostics; an Epistle to Blastus, *On Schism;* a treatise against the Greeks, *On the Subject of Knowledge;* a book of divers *Discourses*, and several letters to Pope Victor and other bishops on the Paschal controversy. Of all these only fragments remain. But we can judge of the Saint's talent from two works that we still possess, if not in the original text, at least in ancient translations.

An Armenian translation of the *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* was discovered in 1909. The work is a rapid exposition of the Christian doctrine, the truth of the Gospel being proved by the Old Testament prophecies. The chief interest of this little book lies in its being the earliest example we have of popular catechetical instruction.

Of much greater importance is the treatise in five books, entitled *Detection and Overthrow of the False Knowledge*, commonly known as *Adversus Hæreses*. We possess some important fragments of the original Greek, and a complete Latin translation which is evidently scrupulously faithful and

certainly ancient, though its exact date is uncertain. An Armenian translation of the two last books completes our knowledge of the writings of Irenæus.

As the title indicates, the author here attacks the Gnostic heresies: he begins by explaining their various forms, particularly those which he has personally to combat, and then he proceeds to refute them. Dialectics, the tradition of the Church, the words of Christ are all employed in the refutation of these false doctrines. Finally, he opposes to them the true teaching of the Church on the Last Days and shows the consistency of the Divine plan, whence he draws a last argument in favour of his belief.

Unlike his master, Justin, Irenæus is not a philosopher. He does not dispute with profane wisdom; he disdains it. His favourite argument is tradition; heretics are in error because they are innovators. The Church possesses the truth because she is faithful to the teaching of Our Lord and the Apostles, and it is in order to prove this fidelity that the Bishop of Lyons is so careful to preserve the List of the episcopal successions of Rome, the Mother Church, round whom gather the believers of the whole Catholic world. This Asiatic, transported to Gaul, has a delicate, cultivated mind; in the beginning of his book he excuses himself for literary faults on the ground that having acquired the habit of preaching in Celtic, he has lost the power of expressing himself in Greek: a useless apology, for Irenæus' Greek is easy, abundant, spiritual. Some of his portraits of heretics are not free from malice, and the writer attains to veritable eloquence when he describes the summing up of all

things in Christ. Some historians have reproached him with confusing his dates, of wrong interpretation of documents, of not clearly distinguishing between the different phases of the Gnostic heresies. This severity seems hardly justified. At any rate no one can doubt the loyalty of the holy Bishop, his perfect good faith, his love of truth, his nobility of soul and his generosity. And such as it is, his work is of capital importance in Christian history.

With Saint Irenæus, Greek Christian literature in Gaul was born and died. A few inscriptions, the best known being that of Pectorius, Bishop of Autun, are all that represent him. In Rome his fame lasted only through the early years of the third century.

Caius.—This priest, of whom very little is known, taught in Rome about the beginning of the third century. The few fragments that remain show that he indulged in violent polemics, prone to exaggeration and even error. His principal adversary was Proclus, a Montanist leader in Rome. It seems that in his endeavour to refute Proclus to silence Caius fell into the error of denying the authenticity of Saint John's Gospel and the Apocalypse. Hippolytus took up against Caius the defence of the Johannine writings, in a treatise of which we possess some fragments.

Hippolytus.—This strange character is the last Christian master of Greek literature in the West, and is one of the most prolific writers of his time. His story very early became legendary, and his works themselves, after having been translated into almost every Eastern tongue, were rapidly forgotten.

The discovery, fragment by fragment, of his writings was begun in 1851 and is still going on.

Hippolytus was a priest of the Roman Church about 212, when Origen came to the West, and the Alexandrian master assisted at one of his sermons. Such is the first certain fact in a history that is terribly obscure. Pope Saint Zephyrinus then occupied the episcopal throne, having Saint Callistus for counsellor. Hippolytus and Callistus were not friends, and when the latter succeeded Zephyrinus, Hippolytus formed a schism and became the head of a dissentient community. He so remained till 235, when persecution was raging, and both Hippolytus and the lawful Pope Pontian were deported to Sardinia, where not long after they died. Hippolytus had been reconciled to the Church, and his body was taken back, together with Saint Pontian's, to Rome, and their names were inscribed in the official list of martyrs.

During his lifetime Hippolytus enjoyed great popularity. His friends raised a magnificent statue to him, which was discovered in 1551, on the Via Tiburtina. The Paschal cycle which he had computed, and a list of his writings are engraved on the sides of the chair in which he is seated. This list, though long, is still incomplete and must be tested and corrected by Eusebius and Ebed-Jesu. By this means we learn that Hippolytus must have written about thirty-five books between the years 200 and 235. These works embrace almost all sacred science—exegesis, chronography and history, apology and dogma, discipline and liturgy. Hippolytus appears as the first of those cyclopædic minds that the ancient Church brought forth.

As exegetist he has explained a great portion of

the Old and New Testaments, sometimes under the form of homilies, sometimes as continuous commentaries. Of these only numerous fragments remain, criticism of which is not always easy. The chief of these are a large portion of a Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles, and nearly the whole of one on the Book of Daniel.

As a chronographer and historian, he has edited chronicles, chiefly in order to reassure his contemporaries as to the date of the end of the world: translated, copied, imitated, completed during the course of antiquity, these chronicles are chiefly known to us through later chroniclers. He also calculated the date of Easter and drew up a Paschal cycle for sixteen years from 222.

As an apologist, Hippolytus wrote treatises *Against the Greeks and Plato*, or, *On the Universe; On God and the Resurrection of the Body; Against the Jews*. His chief works are directed against heresies; first, a *Syntagma*, an abridged refutation of thirty-two heresies, which has been adapted by the Pseudo-Tertullian, Saint Epiphanius and Philastrius; finally, a great work in ten books, the *Refutation of All Heresies*, commonly known as the *Philosophumena*, which contains the history of all the heresies, from those of the Greek philosophers down to the latest and most redoubtable, of which he (unjustly) accuses Saint Zephyrinus and Saint Callistus. This is a work of a tumultuous kind of learning, filled with documents and texts reproduced without much discernment, and finishes like a pamphlet. The author, with incredible force, pours out the flood of his wrath on the two Popes who have misrepresented and misunderstood him. The historian must certainly not accept without reserve

accounts which are so full of bitterness, but, even whilst criticizing them, it is impossible not to admire their eloquence. On contemporary errors Hippolytus also wrote a book, *Against Noetus*, and the *Capita*, against Caius on Saint John's Gospel and the Apocalypse. A treatise *On Antichrist* is also attributed to him, which develops all his ideas on the end of the world.

Finally, as a liturgist and canonist, he wrote two treatises which are lost: *Should we fast on Saturdays?* and *Should Christians communicate every day?* He also composed an *Apostolic Tradition*, which recent studies allow us to identify with the *Egyptian Apostolic Constitutions;* and some *Odes on the Scriptures*, which are perhaps the original Greek of a fragment known as the *Canon of Muratori.*

Incomplete as is this list, it is sufficient to give some idea of Hippolytus' gifts. He was a man who knew somewhat of everything, whom all things interested, and who, on many points, was a pioneer. In his school, before he fell into schism, he filled his auditors with enthusiasm; and even in his schismatical Church he gained the attachment of his followers by his power of organization. Such a prolific writer has not the time to perfect his style, and Hippolytus does not affect fine words; but he expresses himself clearly and easily, and when he writes on subjects which move him to passion he reaches true eloquence. His misfortune was that he lived too late. The Christians of Rome were beginning to speak and write in Latin, and Greek was no longer understood, but Hippolytus could not bring himself to see the necessity of conforming to this change, though his practical mind, constantly

directed to the solving of moral questions, was thoroughly Roman. Above all else his works failed to become classic, because he had failed to remain always united to the Mother Church.

Other Writers.—During the second century there were many Christian writers in Rome besides those we have mentioned. All who wished to make a name, or to convince the world of their doctrines went to Rome; orthodox teachers, like Justin and Tatian; heretics, such as Valentinus, Marcion, Apelles, Theodotus, Praxeas, Proclus and others. All these spoke, taught and wrote. Unfortunately we know few details, and only possess some rare fragments of the many books that appeared during the second century. The works of the heretics were soon condemned to oblivion, and later ceased to be copied; nothing is left but some not very exact quotations made by their refuters.

Valentinus, who came from Egypt, lived in Rome for some twenty-five years. He seems to have written very little, for scarcely anything save hymns, letters and homilies are attributed to him. But the influence of his oral teaching was immense, and his disciples left many works: Heracleon wrote a Commentary on the fourth Gospel which was refuted by Origen; Ptolemy wrote a letter to Flora, remarkable as being an attempt to convert her to Gnosticism; Alexander composed a treatise which may have borne the name of *Syllogisms*. The school certainly possessed prolific writers.

The Church of Marcion had also many writers. The latter came from Sinope, in Pontus, and arrived in Rome about 135. He taught there for a long period, and, in face of the Catholic community, set

up a new Church, of which the fundamental dogma was the rejection of the Old Testament. To legitimize his attitude Marcion composed a book of *Antitheses*, in which the teachings of the Prophets were opposed to those of Christ, and he also revised the New Testament, to adapt it to his theories. His disciples continued his work, with some corrections; the best known of them is Apelles, the author of *Syllogisms* and *Revelations*, both of which are lost.

A little later, quite at the end of the second century, Theodotus of Byzantium established himself in Rome and there propagated his Monarchian theories. Asclepiodotus and Hermophilus distinguished themselves by their zeal in correcting the Bible, but their revisions disagreed. The Catholics rejoiced at these contradictions, which they did not fail to bring forward when refuting the doctrines of the sect. An anonymous work, *Against Artemon*, one of the successors of Theodotus, is quoted by Eusebius, and seems to have been one of the last writings in Greek composed in Rome.

We have seen Hippolytus as a figure out-of-date. After him the Popes, Saints Cornelius and Dionysius in particular, continued to write in Greek to their Oriental correspondents, and we know, by the fragments of their letters that remain, that they knew how to express themselves correctly in that tongue. But they used Latin when writing to Africa, Spain or Gaul. We may therefore say that from about the year 250, Greek definitely disappeared from Rome as a literary language.

CHAPTER II

ASIA MINOR AND GREECE

The Disciples of Saint John. The Adversaries of Heresy. Apocrypha. Greece. The Third Century. Gregory and Methodius.

During the second century Asia Minor was the chief Christian country. The sacred memory of the Apostle Saint John, who had lived so long at Ephesus, still hovered over the Churches of the country. His spirit was preserved, his traditions faithfully remembered. Even when his disciples, in their turn, had left this earth, his teaching was still recalled and served as their life's model. But it is not possible everywhere to preserve the Faith in its integrity, and even in the days of the Apostle heresies arose in Asia and the neighbouring provinces, which developed after his death. During the last half of the second century Phrygia was greatly disturbed by the Montanist heresy, and a little later, Noetus taught in Smyrna. Peace seems to have been restored in the third century, but this supposition may be due to our ignorance. Only a few names remain to us, which tell little of the men and the writings of the hundred years anterior to the Peace of Milan.

The Disciples of Saint John.—The most celebrated of these is Saint Polycarp of Smyrna,

who was martyred in 155 or 156, at the age of eighty-six. He was Bishop of the Church of Smyrna for many years, and already occupied the episcopal throne when Saint Ignatius of Antioch passed through the town. The two became intimate, and their friendship found expression in two letters addressed by Ignatius, one to the community of Smyrna, the other to the Bishop himself. After Ignatius' stay at Smyrna the Philippians begged Saint Polycarp to send them a complete collection of the letters written by the holy Bishop of Antioch. This he did, together with a short letter of his own, full of moral counsels and practical teaching. Much later, in 154, we meet Polycarp in Rome, where he went to discuss questions of discipline with Pope Anicetus. Soon after his return to Smyrna he was put to death. We have a moving account of his martyrdom in a letter addressed by the "pilgrims"[1] of the Church of God in Smyrna to those of Philomelium, and, "to all the brotherhoods of the holy and universal Church." This letter, written by eye-witnesses, is a marvellous testimony to Christian piety: through the sober narrative we get a glimpse of brave and ardent souls, and the valiant personality of the venerable Bishop is clearly apparent.

A friend of Saint Polycarp, Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, is scarcely less celebrated, a celebrity, however, which seems greatly to consist in the mystery that surrounds him. He is said to have composed a work in five books, called *The Oracles*, or *Logia of the Lord*, which is quoted by Irenæus and Eusebius. But the fragments they give are

[1] Cf., 1 Peter ii. 11.

insufficient to show us the exact nature of the *Logia* explained or interpreted by Papias, and this last work of the venerable Bishop of Hierapolis has for many years been the subject of vain discussion. Eusebius considered him as "a man of very small mind," and it is possible that he scarcely merited the celebrity he has gained.

Other anonymous disciples of Saint John are quoted by Irenæus, who makes use of their testimony. He calls them by the general name of "Presbyters," which Papias also used to designate those from whom he had gained his information. It is pretty certain that none of these Presbyters wrote; the fragments that have been preserved are probably the result of oral tradition.

Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus at the end of the second century, is the last of the school of Saint John. He wrote a haughty letter to Pope Saint Victor on the subject of the date of Easter. The Asiatic Church had been commanded to conform to the custom of the Roman See, but Polycrates offered a determined resistance, claiming that their customs were derived from Saint John himself.

The Adversaries of Heresy.—Soon after the year 160 Asia was disturbed by an error that came from Phrygia, whose leaders proclaimed the approaching advent of the heavenly Jerusalem. Montanus, the founder of the sect, does not seem to have written anything; he was content to announce his doctrine, and his prophecies, which were carefully preserved by his disciples, though neither do they appear to have written. But the orthodox Catholics felt obliged to refute in detail the assertions of the new prophet, and a rich literature appeared, of which the

chief authors were bishops of the Churches of Asia. Nothing of this but formless fragments remain, and perhaps no greater and regrettable loss could be sustained in the domain of ancient Christian literature than the anti-Montanist writings of those valiant bishops.

Eusebius quotes the titles of three Apologetic works by Miltiades, whom we do not know for certain to have been an Asiatic: *Against the Jews; Against the Greeks,* and *To Princes.* We also know the name of another book by the same writer: *How a Prophet ought not to speak in Ecstasy,* which was evidently directed against the Montanists. Apollinarius of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, is scarcely better known. Here again it is to Eusebius that we owe a list of his writings: An *Apology* to Antoninus, *For the Faith;* a treatise *Against the Greeks;* two books *On Truth,* perhaps directed against the Jews, and some letters refuting the Montanist prophets. But we possess none of these writings, which belonged to the time of Marcus Aurelius.

Of Melito of Sardis, one of the glories of the Church of Asia in the second half of the second century, we have at least some fragments, imperfect remains of a rich literary output, numbering at least twenty works: *On Easter; On the Church; On the Sunday; On the Prophets; On the Nature of Man; On the Creation; On the Obedience of the Senses to Faith; On the Soul and the Body; On Baptism; To Antoninus; The Key;* and many others. The very catalogue is impressive, and in the author of so many books we behold a mind filled with knowledge, interested in everything and discussing all the great problems with an equal

facility. As one might expect, to such a fertile writer have been attributed many spurious works, and a great number of the fragments that have come down to us under the name of Melito are of doubtful authenticity, and others certainly false.

Apollonius, who combated Montanism about 195, is for us no more than a name. On the other hand we are ignorant of the name of a writer to whom belongs the only anti-Montanist work from which Eusebius made important extracts. This unknown author, who was very well informed as to the beginnings of the sect, and wrote in a lively style, dedicated his work to a certain Avricius Marcellus, Bishop of Hierapolis, whose epitaph, by a curious coincidence, we still possess; it is one of the most important inscriptions left to us by Christian antiquity.

The Apocrypha.—Stories of every kind have always been popular amongst the less educated classes of all nations. A story-teller can always please, and the more marvels he relates, the greater pleasure he gives. As time went on and the lives of Our Lord and His Apostles receded into the past, it became a matter of regret that so little was known of those lives, and that only such sparse details were to be found in the authentic writings of the Apostles and their disciples. However, it was found easy to remedy this ignorance by supplying new books in which the imagination might fill the gaps left in the histories. The practical spirit of the Romans preserved them for a long time from the invasion of the Apocrypha, but elsewhere they were readily accepted, all the more willingly that they presented

an excellent opportunity for instilling into their readers more or less orthodox doctrines. The great factories of the Apocrypha were the heretical communities, but it would be false to maintain that even in the true Church such fabrications were not attempted.

It would be difficult to follow the obscure history of these imaginary Gospels and Acts. Published under false names, quickly spreading far from the country of their origin, constantly changed by translators or readers greedy of new details, these books possessed one property in common: they supplied a popular need of the moment, and though never acknowledged by the ecclesiastical authorities, exercised everywhere a deep, if hidden influence.

The second century gave birth to many of these marvellous histories, and Asia had her share, though perhaps other provinces were more prolific and audacious. It is, for instance, from Asia, about the year 170, that emanated the *Acts of Paul*, written, according to Tertullian, by a priest, a great admirer of Saint Paul, who was in consequence deposed. It is possible also that the original editions of the *Acts of Peter*, *Of Andrew*, and *Of John*, may have come from Asia. We can only read them to-day in second-hand adaptations, containing many alterations.

Of great interest is a *Letter from the Apostles*, which has been preserved in Coptic and Ethiopean; it purports to have been written after the Resurrection, and contains moral counsels, liturgical instructions and even teaching on the other World. It may be dated from 160 to 180, and is probably Asiatic.

The Odes [or *Psalms*] *of Solomon* are also

probably of Asiatic origin. They were discovered in a Syrian translation, and some exist also in Coptic. Of uncertain theology, on which critics are not all agreed, these Odes are the expression of an ardent mysticism, and remain for us a precious example of a Christian prayer that strives to penetrate the Divine Mysteries.

Greece.—The distance between Ephesus and Corinth and Athens is short and easy to traverse. There has always been frequent communication between the two shores of the Ægean Sea, and the Christians of Continental Greece kept up close relations with those of Asia. It is therefore natural to notice here those amongst the former who are distinguished in literary history. The list is short and opens with Quadratus, who, about 125, addressed an *Apology* for Christianity to Hadrian, of which Eusebius has preserved a sentence relating to those on whom Our Saviour had worked miracles. The next is Aristides, a philosopher of Athens, who also wrote an *Apology* to Antoninus Pius, which we possess in Syriac, and portions in Armenian. It also exists in Greek, incorporated by an unscrupulous compiler in the legends of Saints Barlaam and Josaphat, where no one would think of looking for it. Fresh fragments have also been discovered in the papyri.

More recent is the *Apology* of Athenagoras, called *The Supplication for Christians*, and addressed in 177 to the Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. Athenagoras was also an Athenian. Besides his *Apology* we have a treatise on *The Resurrection of the Body*. The preservation of these two works is very fortunate, for they reveal

to us a true philosopher, learned, methodical and clear; one of the first Christians who understood how to compose a book and support an argument. His proofs are not new, nor are the accusations to which he replies. The rather dry precision of his explanations merits for him a high rank in the list of apologists, who, during the second century, strove with more or less success to defend the Christian religion before the Emperors.

The only Bishop of Greece to be quoted, as belonging to this century, is Dionysius of Corinth, a contemporary of Pope Soter (166-175). Eusebius possessed an important collection of his *Letters* to the Churches of Lacedemonia, for peace and unity; of Athens, on faith and living according to the Gospel; of Nicomedia, on the canon of truth, against Marcion; of Gortyna, in Crete, against heretics; of Amastris, on the same subject: of Cnossos, on the same; of Rome, addressed nominally to Pope Soter; finally, to Chrysophora, a Christian lady. The number of these letters and their many different destinations are a striking demonstration of the activity of a great bishop in those far-off days and a manifest proof of the reality of Christian unity.

The Third Century.—Asia Minor, which had given so many great writers to the Church during the second century, is scarcely represented in the literary history of the third. It must, however, be remembered that we know very little, and that only by detached episodes, of this long period, and therefore our ignorance may be the explanation of an apparent sterility.

Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, exercised a great influence in his day. He was on

his way to Antioch to attend the Council against Paul of Samosata, when he died, in 268. He had been a bishop for nearly forty years, and was interested in all the important affairs of the Church. He is chiefly known by an extremely strong letter to Saint Cyprian, on the validity of the baptism of heretics, which the Bishop of Carthage thought well to translate into Latin and insert in his own correspondence. It is a curious composition, full of information on the history of the Asiatic Christians of the third century, and revealing the positive and difficult character of the writer. Firmilian's thesis is false, and his arguments poor, but, as a psychological document, the letter is of great value. He also wrote other works, one in particular on the Holy Ghost, but none of them have been preserved.

Saint Gregory, Bishop of Neocæsarea, in Pontus, is a great character of quite another sort. In his youth he was one of the most illustrious disciples of Origen, whose lectures he attended for five years, from 233 to 238. He was a man of cultivated and intelligent mind, with the soul of an apostle, devoured with zeal, and a heart full of a faith that would remove mountains. His long episcopal career, which lasted till about 270, is remarkable for the great number of conversions which took place in his diocese, and by the miracles with which it pleased God to reward his faith. In the midst of his many occupations Gregory nevertheless found time to write; but most of his works are of a very practical character, referring to actual anxieties.

The oldest of his works is the *Oratio Panegyrica*, or *Discourse of Thanksgiving to Origen*, delivered in 238, when the scholar, having become a master,

was about to leave the school. It contains much rhetoric and juvenile enthusiasm at which we are tempted to smile, but there is at the same time so much true gratitude and fidelity, that we cannot help admiring this beautiful and classic discourse, in which we also find some valuable information on the methods employed in the School of Cæsarea.

Then we have an *Exposition of the Faith*, a *Canonical Letter;* a *Paraphrase of Ecclesiastes;* a treatise to Theopompum, *On the Passibility and Impassibility of God*, to say nothing of some lost works such as *A Dialogue with Ælion.* All these works are more interesting as history than as literature. If Gregory had chosen, he might have been a rhetorician. He preferred to be a bishop and only to write in case of necessity, to explain the Faith, to show the right way of dealing with sinners, to refute pagans. And we may be allowed to think that he was right.

The works of Methodius, Bishop of Olympus, in Lycia, are far more literary in character. He was martyred under Diocletian, about 311, but we know nothing of his life. He was an adversary of Origen, and probably for this reason Eusebius does not mention him. But many of his works have been preserved, some in Greek, others in Slavonian translations, which testify to the prolonged success of the Bishop of Olympus.

In his exegetical works: *De cibis*, or *On the Distinction of Foods* (among the Jews), and *On the Young Cow* (in Leviticus), with allegorical explanations of the Old Testament legislation and the red cow (Numbers xix.); *On Leprosy; On the Leech* and *On the Words*, "*The Heavens declare the Glory of God*," Methodius is not afraid of being

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influenced by Plato's philosophy and uses to a great extent the allegorical explanations of Scripture so dear to Origen and the School of Alexandria. But in his philosophical and theological treatises he energetically opposes Origen, as in *The Resurrection*, which is a pitiless but just refutation of the Egyptian master's exaggerated spiritualism. The book *On Free Will* is directed against the Gnostic dualism and the Valentinian theories on the origin of evil.

The most curious of the writings of Methodius, the best known, and the only one of which we possess the complete Greek text, is the *Symposium*, or *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins*, which is an Apology for Virginity. The title itself is characteristic, and shows that the author intends to imitate Plato, and this intention is clear throughout the work. It is written in the form of a rather dull dialogue and consists chiefly of a series of long discourses. It is very remarkable that at the end of the third century an Asiatic bishop should seek to expound the truths of Christian morality in the traditional terms of classic antiquity. We are here far from the time when the first of the faithful wrote without any anxiety as to form, pouring out their souls in freedom. By this time the Church already understood the magic power of words and knew how to make use of it. Methodius follows his great model only afar off. His rather flowing style is apt to become banal. But he endeavoured to write well, and thus deserves to take his place in a history of literature.

CHAPTER III

SYRIA AND PALESTINE

The Didache. Saint Ignatius. The Palestinians of the Second Century. Tatian. Theophilus and Serapion. Palestine in the Third Century. Pamphilus. Anonymous Writings.

Palestine is the birthplace of Christianity, and Antioch in Syria was its first capital. Nevertheless these regions do not hold a position in literary history proportioned to their religious rôle. During the three first centuries they cannot boast of one eminent thinker or remarkable writer. But they gave birth to two characteristic forms of ancient Christian literature: disciplinary and liturgical treatises, and the Chronicle, the precursor of History.

The Didache.—To the first kind belongs what is perhaps the oldest of Christian writings—apart from the New Testament—that have come down to us: the *Didache*, or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. This little book is surrounded by mystery. The original text, known only by quotations or allusions, was not discovered till 1873, and published in 1883. Its author, country and date of composition are all unknown: it is only by supposition that they can be attributed to Syria and

the last twenty years of the first century, and later critics have assigned the book to the third century. The liturgy and ecclesiastical institutions of which it speaks have no exact equivalent elsewhere. The *Didache* transports us to a mysterious world, and it is not surprising that its sixteen chapters still find fresh commentators.

This *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* is divided into two chief parts. The first (Chap. I-VI) is a moral instruction. There are two ways: one leading to life, the other to death. It is for man to choose between these two ways, the details of which are fully explained. The doctrine in these chapters is quite traditional; we find much the same in other writings, particularly in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, and it has been supposed, not improbably, that the moral teaching of *The Two Ways* had been circulated by itself, as an independent work. The contents of the last chapters are disciplinary and liturgical, and it is these which excite the astonishment of the reader. There are two prayers for the breaking of bread and the blessing of the Chalice: have we here the ancient formulas for the Eucharistic Consecration? There are instructions on the hierarchy: apostles, prophets, teachers, itinerant preachers, who should be received after trial; then of bishops and deacons, who seem to be greatly attached to their local communities. The book ends with a warning to watch for Our Lord's coming and the end of the world. The primitive character of the book is almost disconcerting. If the *Didache* is not the work of a clever forger, which is difficult to believe, it is the most precious document that has come down to us on the interior life of the primitive communities, or at least of some of them.

Saint Ignatius.—If the *Didache* may be said to have transported us into a strange world, we may feel that we are once more at home when we read the seven letters of Saint Ignatius of Antioch. Here, at least, we have certain dates to rely upon: the reign of Trajan, and, more particularly, the years 107-111; a writer, Ignatius, also called Theophorus, a Bishop of Syria, carried to Rome to be there devoured by wild beasts. Everything in this correspondence is concrete and alive, and it is the most touching collection that it is possible to read, for was it not written by a man on his way to death? Brutally torn from his episcopal see, Ignatius is being taken to the imperial capital. From Smyrna, where his captors make a long halt, he writes to the Churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles and Rome. A new stage on the journey brings him to Troas, whence he writes to the Churches of Philadelphia and Smyrna, and also to Polycarp, the Bishop. He hoped to continue this correspondence and to write to all the Christian communities, but an unexpected order hastened his departure and he was forced to continue his journey. We are as ignorant of the end of the story as of its beginning.

The above Epistles are full of encouragement and counsels. Indifferent as to his own fate, the Bishop of Antioch thinks only of the Church. He knows that heretics are trying to weaken her faith and corrupt her discipline, and he understands by experience the clever subterfuges of those men who pretend that Jesus Christ has not come in the flesh. And all this troubles him. With a tender solicitude he implores his readers to remain faithful to the established hierarchy, to the bishops, presbyters and

deacons; he reminds them that there is no valid baptism or Eucharist, save in the Catholic Church, and adjures them not to forget the Rule of Faith they have received from tradition. Both history and theology find valuable information in these Epistles.

The secular reader may prefer the Epistle to the Romans, which may be described as the heart's cry, the passionate longing for martyrdom. The Saint is seized with a terrible fear lest the Christians in Rome should try to save him from death, and thus prevent him from attaining his most ardent desire, and he writes to express his longing to die for the love of Christ. Literature has nothing else like it.

Ignatius was not a literary writer. His style is surcharged, heavy, embarrassed by too many epithets; his sentences are often confused and his vocabulary full of untranslatable neologisms. But one pays little attention to these defects, for in all his letters the soul of the man shines forth, full of generous ardour, and willingly or unwillingly, we must follow him. We are carried away by the torrent, and when we come to the end, feel that with this great bishop we are in a world of spiritual realities, far away from the littleness and wickedness of earth.

It is not surprising that such writings should have tempted forgers. Some have shortened them, giving only three of the Epistles in an abridged form; others, on the contrary, have lengthened and expanded them; a collection, known as *The Long Recension*, contains not only the seven genuine letters, but six spurious ones; to the Tarsians, the Antiochenes, the Philippians, to Hero, to Mary of Cassobola, and one from the same Mary to Ignatius.

Before these three recensions many critics have hesitated, and even the authenticity of the true letters has been questioned. In the present day, however, these seven Epistles seem to be accepted by the best judges, and may therefore be safely read as the true letters of the martyred Bishop of Antioch.

The Palestinians of the Second Century.—During the second century the Church of Palestine led an obscure life. The destruction of Jerusalem had necessarily weakened her. Her controversies with the Judæo-Christians, who tried to reconcile the Gospel with the practice of the Mosaic law, engrossed her best writers, with little profit, and very few works or names have been saved from oblivion.

A number of apocryphal writings, on which we have but scanty information, emanated from the Judaistic Christians. These were chiefly gospels intended to complete or supplement the canonical Gospels: three are given by recent critics—*The Gospel of the Nazarenes*, written in Armenian and very soon translated into Greek, which bears a great resemblance to the Gospel of Saint Matthew; *The Gospel of the Ebionites*, written originally in Greek, and also approaching nearly to the canonical Saint Matthew, but evidently intended to promulgate heretical theories; and *The Gospel according to the Hebrews*, which is mentioned by Clement of Alexandria and Origen. Only fragments remain of all these, which are difficult to authenticate.

Other Gospels that have been preserved in later collections may also belong to the second century, and were circulated amongst the Judæo-Christian communities. Such is the *Protoœvangelium Jacobi*,

which relates the childhood of the Blessed Virgin, her espousals and the birth of Our Lord: this book continued for long to be the most popular of the Apocrypha; it has exercised, both in art and literature, an influence out of proportion with its real merit.

There are, also, more or less legendary histories of the Apostles: *The Acts or Journeys of Saint Peter; The Acts of James*, and others, which have been used by the editors of the Pseudo-Clementine literature: nor must we omit a series of works on the Old Testament, written during the Christian era by authentic Jews, but revised in the second century by Judaising Christians, with apologetic reservations.

We are on surer ground with Ariston of Pella, the author of the most ancient *Apology* against the Jews. In the year 140 he wrote a *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscos*, in which a Christian and a Jew are at variance. But this work is lost.

Of the personality of *Hegesippus* we know little. It seems probable that he came from Palestine and was of Jewish birth. Having become a Christian he undertook a long series of journeys; he stayed for some time in Rome under Pope Anicetus (155-156). Towards the end of his life he wrote a work in five books, under the title of *Memoirs*, of which Eusebius has preserved some portions. This does not appear to have been a continuous history of the Church, but an apologetic refutation of heresies. He appealed principally to tradition, as embodied in the teaching which had been handed down in the Church by her succession of bishops, and in these "successions," or lists which had been carefully preserved by the faithful of the chief Churches, the writer found the decisive proof of their attachment

to the traditional doctrines. Though of an uncritical temper, and an indifferent writer, apparently more accustomed to Armenian than to Greek, Hegesippus was a very conscientious observer. His *Memoirs* must have contained much interesting information on early Christianity, and we could wish that Eusebius had made more use of them.

Tatian.—About the same time that Hegesippus was in Rome another stranger might be seen there who had come from an even greater distance. Tatian was born in Assyria about the year 120, and after living a wandering life as a Sophist, he became a convert to Christianity. He went to Rome and became a disciple of Saint Justin; there he opened a school of his own, where the Asiatic, Rhodon, attended the lectures.

Tatian's was a restless and troubled nature; his soul was as unsettled as his body, and in 172 he left the Church and fell into a sort of Gnosticism. He had then already left Rome for Antioch, and finally returned to his own country. We know nothing of his last days.

He was a prolific writer on many subjects. The following books are lost: a treatise *On Animals; Against Those Who Speak of the Things of God; A Book of Problems; On Perfection According to the Precepts of Our Saviour.* These titles give the impression of a rhetorician anxious to display his knowledge. We only possess *A Discourse to the Greeks* and a portion of a Gospel Harmony called the *Diatessaron.* The first of these is an apology, conceived according to current ideas; it is characterized by violence and irony and the severity of its judgments. Whilst his master, Justin, sought to

excuse the Greeks and saw in their philosophy traces of belief in the Divine Word, Tatian condemns, scoffs and demolishes them; there is a world of difference between the master and the disciple.

Much ink has flowed on the subject of the *Diatessaron.* We know that Tatian proposed, by making use of the four canonical Gospels, to compose a continuous and complete life of Our Lord. Written originally in Syriac, it was long used in the Churches of that language as part of their liturgy. The original text is lost, but attempts have been made to reconstitute it from Arabian, Latin, and even Dutch Harmonies. Certain critics attribute to Tatian and his *Diatessaron* a powerful influence on the constitution of the received text of the Gospels. It is one of the most complicated questions imaginable.

Theophilus and Serapion.—Tatian's last stay in Antioch was during the episcopate of Theophilus, like himself a Syrian by birth. The latter governed the Church of Antioch from about 169 to 180, and these two approximate dates are all we know of his exterior life. The titles of some of his books have come down to us: a *Chronicle,* or *History* from the beginning of the world; a refutation called *Against the Heresy of Hermogenes;* another *Against Marcion,* which, it is believed, has been discovered in Syriac. The only extant work of Theophilus is an *Apology* for Christianity, *Ad Autolycus;* it consists of three separate books. In it the Bishop recalls the true doctrine on the invisibility and unity of God; refutes the polytheism of the pagans, defends the Church from the accusations of the

classical writers, and by a learned chronology demonstrates the antiquity of the true religion.

All this is rather commonplace and helps to explain the historian's attitude of severity towards Theophilus. But we must not be too censorius. It is true that the holy Bishop lacks originality and his mind is rather superficial. He does not rouse the same interest as Tatian; even his calculations do not excite our curiosity. Nevertheless he writes the language of the educated world and we read him willingly. He is the type of a cultivated Christian, and, yet more, of a model bishop, devoted to duty and faithful to tradition. The treatise *To Autolycus* seems to have appeared to him in the light of a task, conscientiously fulfilled by recalling the doctrines accepted by the Church. The apparent novelties in his language need not delude us, for they are certainly borrowed from the current terminology of his time. On the contrary, they are valuable, as enabling us to hear, not one isolated voice, but an echo of the general teaching of that day.

Maximinus, the successor of Theophilus at Antioch, has no place in literary history. But Serapion, who succeeded Maximinus, has his rank there, thanks to a collection of letters addressed to different correspondents on very various subjects. One of these letters, addressed to Domninus, a renegade, who had abandoned Christianity for Judaism, must have been an *Apology;* another, to Caricus and Pontius, was against the Montanist heresy; and lastly, an Epistle to the Christian community of Rhossos, in Syria, warning them of the erroneous character of the apocryphal gospel attributed to Saint Peter. We possess a portion of

this last letter, which gives us an insight into the moral and intellectual character of the Bishop, who was evidently a perfectly honest, though, perhaps, rather a simple man.

After Serapion the Church of Antioch possessed few writers during the third century. The priest Geminus, under Alexander Severus, is only known by name. Of Paul of Samosata and his opponent, the priest Malchion, we have a few fragments in stenography of the discussions that resulted in the condemnation of Paul. Lucian, one of the last victims of the great persecution, is more celebrated, and deservedly so, though he was a learned, rather than a literary man. The great work of his life was a new recension of the Greek version of the Old Testament. Three lines of a letter, a Creed or Symbol, and an apologetic Discourse, the authenticity of which is disputed, are all the literary inheritance he has left us.

Palestine in the Third Century.—During this period Palestine plays a far more important rôle in literature than does Antioch. This was owing partly to exceptionally cultivated bishops, like Alexander of Jerusalem, and to the influence of Origen, who for many years taught in Cæsarea and gained many disciples.

Saint Alexander had studied at Alexandria and had already suffered much, when about the year 213, he arrived in Jerusalem, and there was compelled to remain by the aged Bishop Narcissus, to act as his coadjutor whilst waiting to become his successor. Alexander's extensive correspondence testifies to his activity; he wrote letters to the Christians at Antioch and Antinœ; to Demetrius of

Alexandria and to Origen. Of special importance was the creation of a library he built in Jerusalem, perhaps the first founded by a Christian. It was rich in documents and volumes relating to Christian antiquity. In the following century Eusebius testified to its value. Such a foundation shows a spirit that was rare at that time.

Julius Africanus, as his name indicates, was born in Libya. After having served in the Roman army and travelled much, he became a Christian and finally settled at Emmaus-Nikopolis in Palestine, where he died about 240. He was a great student, interested in many subjects. The most curious of his works is the *Cestes*, or *Embroideries* (sometimes called "Puzzles"), in twenty-four books, a kind of Encyclopedia of sciences—mathematics, botany, medicine, agriculture, astronomy, etc. It is arranged with very little order and with a harshness and audacity that is surprising in a Christian writer.

Of much greater importance and less compromising is his *Chronicle*, which has gained for him the title of "Father of Chronography." It is in five books, and though the original is lost, the many copies and recensions made by later chroniclers give us a good idea of its contents. The question of chronicles was being mooted, and Hippolytus of Rome was already working at his history. Both authors aimed at proving that the Bible furnishes matter for the most exact chronology far more ancient than do profane documents, and also makes it possible to calculate the time of the end of the world, and thus to assuage premature fears. This *Chronicle* is the first Christian attempt at a universal history, and as the source of all later chronography is of great importance.

So learned a man as Julius would be likely to correspond with Origen, and the only one of his works that is wholly extant is a letter to the Alexandrian master, in which he disputes the authenticity of the story of Susanna. Origen's answer has also been preserved.

Pamphilus.—Origen was already dead when Pamphilus arrived at Cæsarea. None knew better than he how to preserve the recollection of the great teacher or to defend his memory when it was unjustly attacked. History presents few more touching instances of posthumous fidelity than that of Pamphilus to a man whose personal disciple he had never been.

Pamphilus was born at Beirut, in Phenicia, and studied in the famous School of Alexandria. He eventually settled in Cæsarea, was ordained priest, and opened a school for the study of theology and exegesis. His influence was considerable, and he gained his pupils' affections to such an extent that Eusebius considered it an honour to bear his name. He taught chiefly by word and example. A great lover of books, he increased, if he did not actually found the famous library of Cæsarea, where Origen's manuscripts were long preserved. Pamphilus had a deep reverence for the Holy Scriptures, and caused many copies to be transcribed, which he carefully revised with his own hand. In 307 he was arrested, under the Diocletian persecution, and thrown into prison. Here he had leisure to write, in collaboration with Eusebius, an *Apology* for Origen, in five books, but he suffered martyrdom before he had completed his task, and Eusebius afterwards added a sixth book. With the exception

of the first book, translated into Latin by Rufinus, this *Apology*, a beautiful work of gratitude and attachment, is lost.

Anonymous Writings.—Two anonymous works which it is important to mention emanated from Syria in the third century: the dialogue *On the Orthodox Faith in God*, and the *Didascalia of the Apostles*.

The first of these is a polemical work, in which an orthodox writer, Adamantius, disputes with Marcionites, a Bardesanite, and Valentinians. The controversy is judged by a pagan, who ends by being converted to Catholicism. This work, which we possess in the Greek text and in a Latin translation, is worthless as a work of art, and the form of the dialogue does not render the development of the argument easy to follow. But we read it with interest, and still more, with profit, for it gives us important information on the ancient heresies, of which the writings have disappeared, and it brings out certain simple aspects of the common Faith on the eve of the Arian controversies.

The *Didascalia*, which we know through a Syrian, and in part, by a Latin translation, both ancient and faithful, is a disciplinary work. It belongs, both in object and method, to a vast literary output, whose anonymous authors prefer to cloak their precepts with the authority of the Apostles, and, as we shall see later, who were themselves made use of in the same way, without shame, by the compilers of the fourth century.

Such as it is, the *Didascalia* instructs us on precepts relating to married Christians, to bishops, widows, deacons and deaconesses, to children and

orphans, to the confessors of the Faith, to Easter and fasting, to relations with heretics and schismatics. On all these subjects, and especially on the rôle of the bishops, it enters into minute details, thanks to which we are put into close touch with the daily life of a Syrian Church towards the end of the third century. It is a little surprising, of course, to learn towards the end of the book, that all these ordinances were made by the Apostles. But the style of this clause need not deceive us: these precise directions were given to a community during the years 260-300, in opposition to the severity of certain doctors and councils on the subject of penance.

CHAPTER IV

EGYPT

The Epistle of Barnabas. The Apocrypha. Doctrinal Writings of the Gnostics. Clement of Alexandria. Origen. Origen's Disciples.

EGYPT's position in the history of Christian literature is strange. We learn it first through the apocryphal books and Gnostic treatises. It was not till the end of the second century that the catechetical School of Alexandria produced works that belonged to the great Catholic Church, but these works are of such importance that they shine throughout the third century and exert their influence even beyond it.

The Epistle of Barnabas.—Should this Letter of Barnabas be placed among the Egyptian Apocrypha? Undoubtedly, for the name of Barnabas is usurped. Nevertheless this work was venerated by all Christian antiquity, and in many Churches was for long reckoned amongst the Sacred Scriptures, and therefore it deserves special treatment. Addressed to converts from paganism, the Epistle is divided into two parts: the first is doctrinal, and is an attempt to prove that the Jewish Law is abolished and that its ordinances should be interpreted allegorically. The second part contains moral

teaching, and repeats almost textually the doctrine of the Two Ways as it is given at the beginning of the *Didache*.

The history of this little book is quite obscure; neither its author nor its date, nor the country of its origin is known. Two passages in Chapters IV and XVI seem to furnish some chronological indications, but they are so confused that nothing can be made of them. On the whole it seems probable that the Epistle belongs to Hadrian's reign and is of Egyptian origin. The use of exaggerated allegory in explaining the Mosaic observances is so characteristic of Egyptian exegesis that this conclusion is the most likely.

The Apocrypha.—The Apocrypha, properly so-called, that pretend to complete the canonical Books of the New Testament, rank much below the Epistle of Barnabas. It is difficult to assign the exact origin of the fragments discovered in the papyri at Oxyrynchus and elsewhere, known sometimes as the *Logia*. It was thought at first that they might have formed part of a complete gospel, but now it is supposed that they are extracts from collections of the sayings of Our Lord. Most of them are in sufficient agreement with the canonical Gospels to make it probable that they are the true words of the Saviour.

The Gospel According to the Egyptians, cited by Saint Clement of Alexandria, and, possibly, by the author of the *Secunda Clementis*, is certainly heterodox; the few fragments which remain contain a doctrine of rigid asceticism that has never been held by the Catholic Church. Its antiquity—for it dates from the beginning of the second

century—makes its loss much to be regretted by scholars.

It is not quite certain that the *Gospel* and *Apocalypse of Peter* are of Egyptian origin, for it was in the Antiochene communities that this Gospel was read about the year 200. But considerable fragments of these two writings have been found in Egypt, and it is therefore probable that they belonged there. Some passages in the Gospel contain an account of the Passion founded on the Synoptics and Saint John; in the Apocalypse there are visions of heaven and hell. These visions are curious, and in the course of centuries will find many imitators.

Frankly Gnostic were the *Gospels of Matthias*, *Of Philip*, and *Of Thomas*, according to the testimony of ancient authors who had read them, and whom we must believe, as we know almost nothing of this trilogy, which belongs to the last half of the second century.

Doctrinal Writings of the Gnostics.—The success of Gnosticism in Egypt during the second century is rather surprising. One cannot help asking how the intellectual and mystical Alexandrians could take interest in all these increasingly complicated and subtle systems, intended to explain the mystery of the world. But this is an insoluble question. If the leaders of Gnosticism wrote much, only sparse fragments of their books remain; and the only complete Gnostic works that we possess are the tardy abstracts of less vigorous minds, who cared only to retain from the teaching of Gnosticism genealogies of æons and magical recipes for vanquishing evil spirits.

The oldest of the great Gnostic doctors seems to

have been Basilides, who taught at Alexandria during the reign of Hadrian, and posed as the interpreter of Glaukias, the disciple of Saint Peter. He was the author of an enormous work, in twenty-three or twenty-four books, called *Exegetics*, according to Saint Clement, *A Gospel Commentary*, according to Agrippa Castor; and *Hymns*, or *Odes*, probably destined for liturgical use. His son, Isidore, continued his father's system and was a prolific writer. He wrote at least two books of *Commentaries on the Prophet Parchor;* a book of *Ethics*, or *Paræ*netics, and a treatise *On the Second Soul.*[1] The fragments that remain of all these works are insufficient to give us any exact idea of them.

Valentinus, on the contrary, who taught for a long time in Rome under Antoninus, wrote very little, and only letters, homilies and psalms, written for particular occasions. His disciples were less reticent, and as they were constantly refuted, we still possess a good deal of Valentinian literature. We have already mentioned the Letter of Ptolemy to Flora, and the commentary on Saint John, by Heracleon, both of which came from the Roman School. The writings of Theodotus belong to the Eastern School, and we possess an important collection of extracts from them made by Clement of Alexandria.

The third chief of the Alexandrian Gnostics is Carpocratus, of whose literary activity we know nothing. His son, Epiphanius, a marvellously endowed youth, according to his friends, died at the age of seventeen. He had already written a treatise *On Justice*, which we know through Clement.

[1] *Psyche Prosphyes*, or *Appendage-Soul.*

Some historians greatly admire the Gnostic remains; they see in them the work of original minds, who were deeply religious, and powerful metaphysicians. But we may presume that these authors are not the first comers: the influence the Gnostics exercised over the second century is a better proof of their value. But it would be imprudent to go too far. The orthodox writers, to whom we owe our knowledge of the Gnostic leaders, knew how to appreciate their qualities when necessary, but they are far from bestowing on them an unreserved admiration, and their attitude, we think, should determine our own.

The only complete Gnostic writings that have come down to us date from the beginning of the third century. They do not give us a very high idea of the intelligence of either authors or readers. One soon gets lost in the extraordinary medley of discourses, hymns and formulas, of long and monotonous enumerations and genealogies which fill these books. We must, however, suppose that they had readers, especially amongst the general public, as they were translated into Coptic and have been preserved in that language. Even to-day they excite a certain amount of curiosity; they are still being translated in England and Germany and read with rather surprising enthusiasm.

The work called *Pistis Sophia*, "Faith—Wisdom," appears to be an adaptation of three different books; the first relates the history of Pistis Sophia, one of the personages in the Gnostic spiritual world; the second under its ancient title, *Questions of Mary, Small and Great*, relates to the conditions of salvation for divers categories of sinners, and the third describes the faults of

the Archons and the celebration of the mysteries of water.

Two works of the same kind are preserved at Oxford under the title of the papyrus of Bruce; one is called the *Book of Jeû*, the other has no title. They both contain many directions to assure the salvation of the initiated and to enable them to penetrate into the mysteries of the invisible world.

A papyrus in Berlin is said to contain other very interesting Gnostic works: a *Gospel of Mary;* an *Apocryphon of John;* a *Wisdom of Jesus Christ; The Acts of Peter.* So far only fragments of these have been published, in spite of the impatience with which the literary world is waiting for a complete edition of these works.

In the papyri occasionally discovered during excavations in Egypt there are hymns, prayers, magical texts savouring of Gnosticism, but it is difficult to determine their exact origin. Several may have emanated from heretical sects, but others are probably written by Orthodox Catholics, and express popular beliefs, though in equivocal and sometimes inexact forms. Such documents are most interesting, as they show us, not the considered thoughts of theologians, but the daily life of the simple faithful, their devotions and even their superstitions, thus enabling us to measure the influence exercised over souls by Christian preaching during the second century.

Clement of Alexandria.—Towards the end of the second century there existed at Alexandria "a School of Oral Instruction," or *Didascale* much like that which Justin had formerly opened in Rome, where Christian masters explained the dogmas and

moral teaching of the Church to all comers. The oldest known of these masters was Pantænus, a disciple of the presbyters who had known the Apostles: "A veritable bee who flew over the meadows and sucked the honey from the flowers of the Prophets and Apostles, in order to feed the souls of those who heard him with the pure riches of knowledge—*gnosis*." Pantænus left no writings. His glory is in having had Clement of Alexandria for his disciple and in having excited in his pupil a grateful enthusiasm that was expressed in the above quotation.

Clement was born in Athens towards the middle of the second century. Of pagan birth, he settled in Alexandria after having travelled in Italy, Syria, Palestine and Egypt. During the course of his wanderings he sought earnestly for Truth, reading the ancient authors and questioning living masters. At last he found what he sought in Christianity and embraced it whole-heartedly. We meet him personally for the first time about 190, when he had succeeded Pantænus as the head of the *Didascale*. All the intellect of Alexandria flocked to his chair; some out of curiosity, others eager to acquire science and philosophy, the idle in want of occupation, the rich to employ their leisure, heretics in search of truth. The simple faithful avoided the road to the school, fearing lest its teaching should be above them. The Bishop, however, was more confident and protected the master, whom he raised to the priesthood. Meanwhile Clement taught with great earnestness. He was an optimist, always striving to draw good out of evil. He exhorted the pagans to leave their superstitions; in words of raillery he brought to trial their gods and their

mysteries, in which he had himself been initiated in his youth: then, in more elevated and solemn language, with scarcely repressed emotion, he would bring them to the feet of the Incarnate Word, who would enlighten and guide them in His divine school.

The newly converted also needed a guide, and with untiring patience Clement taught them first the practice of a Christian life: his lessons were always wise and moderate: the Greeks possessed much that was good—why abandon it? Riches can be used as a means of salvation, if they are rightly employed. Slowly, without undue pressure, Clement goes through all the actions of the day; behaviour at table, subjects of conversation, how to spend their hours of leisure; he teaches how the mind should be purified, and seeks to raise his hearers above the common ways of daily life and to model them gradually after the example of Jesus Christ. And when these lessons are finished, the master passes to the doctrinal portion of his task. He is not content to explain only the elementary doctrines of the Faith; he desires to make of his disciples true Christian Gnostics, docile to all the teachings of the Church, but also thoroughly instructed in and capable of understanding her mysteries.

For fifteen years Clement gave these lectures on Christian wisdom to the Alexandrians. In 202-203 the persecution of Septimus Severus obliged him to close his school and leave Alexandria. He took refuge in Cappadocia, near Bishop Alexander, who had been his pupil. Here he died, in silence and oblivion, between 211 and 215.

We learn Clement's method through his many writings, which are, in fact, chiefly reproductions of

his oral teaching. His three principal works are the *Protreptic*, "Exhortation"; the *Pedagogue*, "Tutor," and the *Stromata*, "Miscellanies." The first is addressed to the pagans, and is intended to turn them from their errors and guide them to the Church. The *Pedagogue* is a practical moral treatise: after a series of chapters demonstrating the necessity of a spiritual "tutor," Clement explains the duties of daily life. It is addressed chiefly to the rich and educated, and he writes of conversations, meals, furniture and the toilette, all the things that form the preoccupations of life on earth.

The *Stromata*, or Miscellanies, is Clement's most important work, and also the most difficult to analyse. Nowhere does he show himself more indifferent to the order of his ideas than in this great treatise. He goes from one subject to another at haphazard, according to his fancy. He multiplies digressions, and does not trouble to return to develop his first argument. When he has filled enough papyrus he stops abruptly: one book is finished; the subject may or may not be continued in the next. In point of fact, we possess seven *Stromata*, and we know that the still unfinished work was to have been completed. The title itself indicates that the author did not intend to confine himself to following a methodical plan. These Miscellanies are like a piece of tapestry worked all over in different colours. Taken as a whole, however, we see in it a treatise of moral Gnosticism, taking the word in its orthodox sense, of Knowledge. The *Pedagogue* taught the rules of ordinary conduct. The *Stromata*, destined for the perfect, guides them to tranquillity and knowledge.

Besides these three great works, we have also a

Homily of Clement's, *Who is the Rich Man who will be saved?*, a work of great good sense and philosophical ingenuity; a logical treatise known as *Stromata VIII;* some notes and extracts from different papers; *Extracts from Theodotus*, and *Extracts from the Prophetical Scriptures;* and the fragments of a great work in eight books, bearing the title of *Hypotyposes*, which must have been an allegorical commentary on the Bible. All this is much, but it does not represent the whole literary work of the master. The catalogue of Eusebius also mentions treatises *On Easter; On Fasting; On Calumny: To the Judaïsers*, and several others.

Clement must have been a delightful talker. He knows and has read everything, and speaks of it all pleasantly and without effort. He quotes poets and prose writers with an extraordinary memory: his works are an almost inexhaustible mine of information, and by them alone we know many authors of profane antiquity. He likes to relate stories, and everything serves him as an occasion for recalling a legend, for quoting some delightful thought of a philosopher, or the raillery of a comic poet. His language, also, is clear and abundant, perhaps a little diffuse, but perfectly correct for the time and place. These qualities may easily become defects in written books, and we must concede that Clement did not understand the art of composition. It is possible to find a plan in the *Tutor* and the *Exhortation*, but not in the *Miscellanies*, which are only a collection of notes, recollections, texts and reflections. But we are carried away by all this *bonhomie*. Clement may be lengthy, but he is never wearisome; his optimism delights us; nowhere

has Christianity shone with such grateful joy as in this true son of Greece.

Origen.—However great he may have been, the glory of Clement pales before that of his disciple, Origen. The latter is the greatest master of the Alexandrian School. An exegetist, a theologian, a preacher and an apologist he has handled every subject and has shown himself inferior in none.

Thanks to Eusebius, we know the details of his life. He was born about 185 or 186, and had the happiness of belonging to a Christian family. His father, Leonides, was his first instructor, his education being finished by Pantænus and Clement. He showed such extraordinary intelligence, joined to such great wisdom, that on the departure of Clement in 202-203, the Patriarch Demetrius placed him at the head of the School of Alexandria, though he was scarcely eighteen.

Then there began for him a life entirely devoted to teaching and the composition of literary works. Many of his pupils were his seniors in age; he subjugated them by his authority; others were more educated, and therefore he did not hesitate to continue his own studies. He attended the lectures of the neo-Platonist, Ammonius Saccas, and he learned Hebrew that he might be able to read the Old Testament in the original text. Day after day a larger and more attentive audience gathered round his chair.

His lectures were sometimes interrupted by journeys; in 212 he went to Rome, "to visit the very ancient Church," and about the year 215 he visited Palestine. His reputation accompanied him everywhere; in Rome Hippolytus considered it an

honour to preach before him, and at Cæsarea, in Palestine, Bishop Theoctistus asked him to expound the Scriptures in the Church, though he was still a layman. In 218 or 219 he returned to Alexandria, at the height of his fame and his science. Here he was fortunate enough to find Ambrose, a veritable Mæcenas, who provided him with stenographers and copyists, so that his works obtained a large circulation.

This fruitful activity was abruptly ended in or about the year 230, when Origen paid another visit to Palestine and Bishop Theoctistus ordained him priest. After visiting Ephesus, Nicomedia and Athens he returned to Alexandria, intending to resume his course of lectures. But for some reason [Eusebius hints at jealousy], the Patriarch Demetrius refused to acknowledge his priesthood, suspended him, forbade his return to the school, and drove him from Egypt.

But Origen was indomitable. He took up his residence in Cæsarea and his school followed him. He resumed his teaching, he preached and wrote. He became the judge of orthodoxy; recourse was had to him from all parts for the refutation of heretics, for expounding the true doctrine, for the resolution of difficult questions. In 250 the persecution of Decius found him at his post. He had escaped the persecutions of Septimus Severus in 202-203, and of Maximinus, in 235-237, but that of Decius was more severe. Origen was cast into prison and tortured, but torture had no power to shake his constancy. After his release he went to Tyre, in Phenicia, where he died, about 253, worn out by age, labour and the sufferings he had endured for the Faith.

Such a life, entirely devoted to the service of the Church, is of incontestable beauty. No doubt Origen made mistakes. He was too fond of philosophy and placed too high a value on the power of human reason, as well as being too much inclined to confound Christianity with knowledge—*gnosis*—and the Church with a school. His adventurous spirit was not sufficiently distrustful of vast syntheses, in the construction of which the traditional Catholic doctrine was not given its due place. He therefore deserved the condemnations he has received. But it would be unjust not to recognize his uprightness and loyalty. If he did not die a martyr, it was not from want of readiness; from his youth up to the end of his career he never ceased to bear testimony to the truth.

As a writer Origen may be said to be almost universal. In the fourth century no less than six thousand works were attributed to him: this is no doubt an exaggeration, though Saint Epiphanius seems to consider it likely. The greater portion of this enormous amount has disappeared, whilst of some remains we have only Latin translations. We possess very little in the original text of the work of this great Alexandrian.

Most of Origen's works are devoted to the explanation of Scripture. The word of God is for him the beginning and end of wisdom; he there finds hidden all the treasures of truth, all the instructions for practical life. It is enough to study and understand it in order to know everything and arrive at perfection. Therefore the master never ceased to comment it from the day when he began to teach in the School of Alexandria.

He needed above everything a correct text of the

books of the Old and New Testaments which were the daily bread of his spiritual life. Therefore he set himself to the composition of the *Hexapla*, a colossal production, where, in six parallel columns, are minutely copied the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, the transliteration of this text in Greek characters, the versions of Aquila and Symmachus, of the Septuagint and Theodotion, with typographical symbols, the asterisk, the obelus and the metobelus, intended to mark where the Septuagint differed from the Hebrew. The Psalms also were copied in eight columns, for Origen, to his joy, discovered two other Greek versions. It was a stupendous work and must have taken many years of labour. Begun in Alexandria it was finished at Cæsarea. But Origen was far from foreseeing that no one would have the courage to transcribe his work. Copies of portions were made and some abridged editions drawn up. The work itself disappeared when the valuable library of Cæsarea was destroyed.

After the arrangement of the text came the explanations. According to the custom of savants Origen drew up *scholia* for the clearance of grammatical difficulties, and commentaries, divided into *tomes*, which contained a detailed exegesis of the Sacred Books. Under the pen of the tachygraphers, who followed the master's dictation with difficulty, these commentaries were indefinitely prolonged. Indifferent to the literal sense, Origen was only interested in the spiritual meaning of the Holy Scriptures, and the allegorical method inspired him incessantly with fresh developments. One after the other, he interpreted the Gospel of Saint John, Genesis, the Psalms, Proverbs, the Canticle of

Canticles, Isaias, Lamentations, Ezechiel, the Minor Prophets, the Gospels of Saint Matthew and Saint Luke, and the Epistles of Saint Paul. He took up, abandoned, and took up again what seems to have been an endless task. Several commentaries were left unfinished, in spite of their great length; the work appears to have overcome the workman. Others, however, were completed, and the Canticle of Canticles was given two successive interpretations. But this work, like the *Hexapla*, proved too heavy for posterity. None of these learned commentaries have come down to us in their original form, and we have to be content to read their imposing debris.

Origen was a great preacher and he wrote homilies for the simple faithful. We are too much inclined to imagine him as a learned scholar, shut up in his library; but he was nothing of the kind. This scholar was an apostle, devoured by a fiery zeal. He preferred the pulpit in the Church to the chair in the schools, and when preaching to the common people his language was simpler, his explanations humbler and above all, more practical. We still possess, mostly in Latin translations, more than two hundred homilies on different Books of the Old and New Testaments; they contain perhaps the most interesting, and certainly the most moving portions of Origen's work, for we see him in touch with the crowd of believers, and they tell us, more than any other book, of the Christian life of the third century.

His Scriptural writings were the work of Origen's maturity and old age, and we have spoken of them first as being the most characteristic of his spirit. But it is probable that his great dogmatic work,

De Principiis, was anterior in date. This last is unique of its kind in Christian antiquity, for it represents the oldest *Summa Theologica* known to exist. With an unequalled boldness, Origen undertakes to give a general exposition of the Christian dogmas, beginning with the internal Nature of God, and ending with the consummation of all things. The work consists of four books, and is not without some disorder, but it leaves one stupefied at the number of new ideas put forward in its pages. Such an audacious attempt soon raised up adversaries, and nearly two centuries later it still provoked violent controversies amongst theologians. Rufinus translated it into Latin to demonstrate its innocuousness; Saint Jerome, on the contrary, also translated it with the intention of proving it dangerous. The Greek text and Saint Jerome's translation have perished, and we have only Rufinus' not perfectly faithful version; from this, however, we can judge of the work and recognize that several of the solutions proposed in it are irreconcilable with the teaching of the Church.

Origen's other theological works were some Miscellanies, or *Stromata*, and two treatises *On the Resurrection*, but these are lost.

We possess, on the other hand, an ascetical treatise *On Prayer*, and *An Exhortation to Martyrdom*, both of very great interest. In them we meet once more the Christian priest, devoted to the salvation of souls, thrilling with emotion at the thought of martyrdom, to which he encourages his disciples. These little books were formerly much read, and they deserve to be read now.

Origen's work as a writer concludes with an important apologetic treatise. His disciple Ambrose

had shown him a book called *A True Discourse*, written about the year 178, by Celsus, a heathen philosopher. Origen judged the book sufficiently dangerous to need a refutation, and about 248 he began the task and produced the most complete and powerful *Apology* known to Christian antiquity. "He follows his adversary point by point, refuting in detail each of his false propositions. It is a model of reasoning, erudition and honest polemic." [1] His erudition, indeed, served him well in this refutation of paganism, which must have been his literary testament.

Since his death Origen has been in the Church "a sign to be contradicted." As a theologian and exegetist he is certainly not beyond censure. Even as a writer, which interests us most here, he does not rank very high; but his defects are easily explained if we remember the amount he published, and that most of his works were taken down in notes and left without the necessary revision. But all agree in admiring in him a noble and generous soul, with high ideals of sanctity, and a broad mind, devoted to science but docile and submissive to the Church. In the history of Christian thought Origen holds a unique position.

Origen's Disciples.—It is not surprising that Origen's influence should last for long after his death. For half a century at least, the writings and the thought of Egypt belonged to his school. We do not know much of the literary activity of Heraclas, his successor in the Alexandrian School, of Ambrose, his protector and friend, nor of a

[1] F. Prat.

certain Tryphon, to whom we owe some exegetical works. But Dionysius of Alexandria appears as a great bishop.

He, too, had taught in the catechetical school, and was raised to the episcopate in 248-249, when he immediately became involved in the controversies that occupied the Church during that very troubled time: questions as to the treatment of those who had lapsed during the persecutions; Novatian and his schism; baptism administered by heretics; Sabellianism; Paul of Samosata. Saint Dionysius took part in all these. He wrote not only to the other bishops of Egypt, and to those of Pentapolis, who depended on him, but also to the simple faithful, to priests, to the Popes Cornelius, Sixtus Stephen, and Dionysius; to Philemon, a Roman, to Theotecnus of Cæsarea, to Fabius of Antioch, to the faithful of Laodicea and to the Church of Armenia. By his activity he recalls his contemporary, Saint Cyprian of Carthage, whom, perhaps, he surpasses by his breadth of view and humane disposition, inducing him to take an indulgent view on many questions, so that he became the great peacemaker of his day.

Eusebius possessed a complete collection of his letters, and had long portions copied, which is fortunate, for we only know what the historian has told us of this correspondence. We know still less of his other works. He composed a treatise *On Nature* in refutation of the Atomistic theories of Epicurus and his disciples; two books *On the Promises*, against the error of the Egyptian bishop, Nepos, who taught that " there would be a reign of Christ upon earth for a thousand years, a period of corporal delights "; and a theological work

entitled *A Justification and Apology*, defending himself from an accusation of Subordinatianism that had been brought against him in Alexandria and received by Saint Dionysius of Rome. This last work regarding the history of the dogma of the Blessed Trinity would have been important to know, but like the rest it has only been preserved in isolated passages.

We know scarcely anything of Dionysius' successors in the great school, Theognotus and Pierus; there are only a few titles and appreciations of their works, preserved by Saint Jerome and Photius. The loss of the writings of these two men is the more to be regretted as they lived and taught during a period of which we are almost totally ignorant.

Anatolius of Alexandria, afterwards Bishop of Laodicea; Phileas, Bishop of Thmuis and martyr during the great persecution; Hesychius, author of a new recension of the Greek Bible; Hieracas, the first ecclesiastical writer in Coptic; all these are to us only names which bring us down to the fourth century. A Bishop of Alexandria named Peter was then living, and he seems to have been the first writer in Egypt to show definite opposition to Origenism. He composed two treatises, *On the Non-pre-existence of Souls*, and *On the Resurrection*, which are both completely lost. There remains a letter on the Sacrament of Penance, or rather, fourteen canons accompanying the letter, in which we have valuable instructions on the conditions of thought in Egypt at the time of the great persecution.

This long list of Christian Egyptian writers is by no means complete. It gives the principal names

which interest the literary historian, but does not include works that, without being strictly literature, are not less important: such are letters, prayers, hymns, fragments of all sorts that are being constantly discovered in the course of recent excavations. Of all these remains of unknown writers we hardly know the dates. Taken singly, they seem worthless. But as a whole, they offer unique evidence of the internal life of the early ages, into which they introduce us. It is impossible to describe them in detail, but it would be unjust not to remember their contribution to the historian's knowledge.

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SECOND PERIOD

THE GOLDEN AGE

(313-410)

GENERAL SUMMARY

The Edict of Milan marks the beginning of a fresh period in the history of Christianity. The Church is henceforth free from anxiety regarding the State, which protects her, and she develops amongst those who till then had resisted her influence. The intellectual world comes and puts at her service its rhetoric and profane literature. Christian writers show themselves increasingly anxious to adopt the literary forms ignored or despised by their predecessors. But their cultus of finer language never induces them to speak when they have nothing to say, or to cover empty thoughts with artistically worded phrases. Whilst the last pagan writers are wearing themselves out in the composition of finely-worded but empty works, the great Christian orators are employing all their knowledge of language in the service of the doctrine and morals that they have to teach the faithful. If the fourth century is the golden age of Christian literature, it is precisely because we find in the works it has produced this indispensable union of vigorous thought clothed in rich and eloquent language.

During this period we find an increasing divergence, and even opposition between the different schools. There is a gulf between Alexandria and Antioch. Until the death of Saint Athanasius and

even beyond, Egypt is the citadel of Orthodoxy against Arianism. Antioch, on the contrary, together with Palestine and Syria, is the chosen land of heresy, more or less openly preached, until, towards the end of the fourth century, she gives to the Catholic Church one of her greatest orators, Saint John Chrysostom. In Asia Minor, Cappadocia, formerly made illustrious by Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus, remains the centre of religious life; after having been the purveyor of Arianism, by her Sophists, preachers and even her bishops, she produces about the year 360, the three famous doctors of the Church, Saint Basil, Saint Gregory Nazianzen and Saint Gregory of Nyssa.

CHAPTER V

EGYPT

Alexander. Saint Athanasius. Serapion of Thmuis. The Monks. Didymus.

About the year 323 Alexandria became the country of Arianism, for there Arius, the priest of Baucalis, who came from Pentapolis, taught for the first time his doctrine, which made the Son of God a creature. But Arius had been formed in the School of Antioch, and only belonged to Egypt by the fact of his residence there. Egypt rose up against him as soon as he began to preach, and the Christian literature of the country during the fourth century is essentially anti-Arian.

Alexander.—The first to denounce the errors of Arius was the Patriarch Alexander (312-328). As soon as he heard of it he wrote to his colleagues in the Episcopate, begging them to join with him in condemning the heresiarch. Saint Epiphanius speaks of a collection containing no less than seventy letters on the subject. This valuable collection has not been preserved, though we have some portions of it, namely, two Encylicals, one of which was addressed to Alexander of Byzantium. These Encylicals, drawn up in the heat of con-

troversy and unstudied in style, expose the teaching of Arius and indicate the arguments with which to refute him. Alexander also wrote a certain number of homilies, of which we possess some more or less authentic fragments in a Syriac translation.

Saint Athanasius.—The great champion of the Catholic cause is Athanasius, the successor of Alexander. He had all the qualities of a leader, and during his long episcopate he displayed them magnificently. The forty-six years that he was at the head of the Church of Alexandria was the most troubled period imaginable. He had to fight unceasingly against Arius and his partisans, the Meletian schismatics, the Emperor, and even sometimes against unskilful and intransigent defenders of the Faith of Nicæa. Athanasius coped with his adversaries with unfailing courage. They could exile him, which they did not fail to do; five times he was forced to quit his episcopal city and to seek refuge, sometimes at Trèves, in the distant West, sometimes in the solitudes of the Thebaid. One after the other the Emperors Constantine, Constantius, Julian and Valens tried to get rid of him, or at least to reduce him to silence, but they all failed before his constancy. None could silence that voice, which cried out unceasingly in defence of the Truth that was being assailed. At times Athanasius seemed to stand alone, proclaiming to the world the Creed of Nicæa. All others were either powerless, or had rallied to the enemy, and the world was astonished to find itself Arian. But a cause that was supported by Athanasius could not be lost.

It is easy to understand what must have been the

literary productions of such a man. How, in the midst of so agitated a life could any place be found for learned works that needed quiet and reflection? Before his consecration as bishop, and even before the commencement of the Arian controversy, Athanasius did write such a work: an *Apology* in two books: *Contra Gentes*, and *De Incarnatione Verbi*. It is a beautiful treatise, composed according to all the rules of literary art. The first book is a refutation of paganism; the second explains the reasons for the Incarnation and the proofs of Christianity. The author takes pains to write well and, when necessary, quotes profane authors.

Athanasius' life was one of perpetual conflict from the year 328, and gave him no time for writings such as the above. Thenceforth he only took up his pen in the defence of the Council of Nicæa, or, what was the same thing, to defend himself. All his books are personal Apologies, full of life and heat, crammed with facts, arguments and proofs. With marvellous precaution he kept all letters addressed to him, together with copies of those he wrote himself; he also kept immense packets filled with documents, imperial edicts, episcopal investigations, official reports, Conciliary Creeds. Then, when needed, he had all these documents at hand.

History he sometimes uses as a means of pleading his cause, which is not merely his own, but is the cause of the whole Church. The *Apology against the Arians* recalls the events that have taken place since 330, and insists particularly on the Councils of Tyre (335) and Sardica (343). *The Apology to Constantius* and *The Apology for his Flight* justify the writer from the accusations brought against

him after the tragic incidents of 356. In *The History of the Arians to the Monks* Athanasius describes the beginnings of Arianism and pursues his vivid and picturesque account down to 357. These works are so full of minute details and official texts that at first they might appear to be calm and impartial histories. But before long some word, an insult launched in passing at an adversary, a sharp or witty remark, give pause to the reader; he looks closer and perceives that the writer has spoken with deliberate intention and has a singularly personal manner of representing his subject. Athanasius never falsified his documents, though recent historians have sometimes accused him of doing so; those he quotes are all authentic. But he does not always relate everything, and leaves out certain testimonies that might serve against him. But do not let us ask of him more than he intended to do. If we read his historical books in the spirit in which they were written, we shall find ourselves in the midst of the struggle, and shall allow ourselves without difficulty to be convinced by such a wonderful advocate, who is both a hero and a saint.

Athanasius acts in the same way with his letters. There are his Encyclicals; that of the year 340, addressed to all the bishops of the Catholic Church, and that of 356, to the bishops of Egypt and Libya: what spirit and heat are in them! The writer does not fear to lay bare his soul, to breathe his complaints, to cry out in his indignation. The Arians have torn his Church to pieces and driven him from his See, in contempt of the most sacred rights. Why should they be treated with consideration and respect? Then there are his letters: *On the Opinion of*

Dionysius; On the Synods of Rimini and Seleucia; On the Decrees of the Council of Nicæa; letters, it is true, in form, but in fact real treatises, intended to withdraw the Arians from the patronage of Saint Dionysius, which they had dared to claim, and to hasten the reconciliation of the Homoiousians, partisans of Basil of Ancyra. These writings, in which the best arguments are the texts and conciliary formulas, are specially interesting from the spirit of peace and concord they evince towards the brethren who are separated by an obvious difference of verbal expression. The letters *To the Antiochenes* (362), *To the Emperor Jovian* (363), and *To the Africans* are posterior to the period of the great struggles; they are written in the name of the Councils of Alexandria, and remind their readers of the true claims of the Nicene Council. Athanasius had conquered when he wrote these letters, and could afford to express himself in a pacific and tranquil manner which is new to us.

It is the same in the three letters to Serapion of Thmuis *On the Divinity of the Holy Ghost;* in those *To Epictetus of Corinth; To Adelphius; To Maximus the Philosopher,* on the Incarnation and the real existence of the Human Soul in Christ: these are doctrinal Epistles, and proper names are all the more carefully avoided in that they treat of doctrines taught by the adversaries of Arius, and the writer deems it preferable to refute the errors without naming the authors too precisely.

The Bishops of Alexandria were accustomed to announce each year to their diocesans the date of Easter, in a special letter, and Athanasius kept up the tradition, even during his long periods of exile. We have only thirteen of these *Festal Letters* in

a Syriac version. Their tone is surprisingly calm. Even those written during the Saint's most tragic years contain only spiritual instructions, with scarcely any reference to current events, and we can only conclude that the writer is obeying a strictly fixed rule, and is unwilling to distract his people from their spiritual progress by mixing them up with controversy.

To these occasional writings must be added some dogmatic treatises, composed however, no less to meet special occasions and needs; the most important is that *Against the Arians*, in three books, the fourth book given in some manuscripts and later editions being considered inauthentic by recent historians. We must not seek in it a profound or subtle theology on the Trinity or the Incarnation, for Saint Athanasius was not a professional metaphysician, and he had not time to delay over his work. It sufficed him to establish firmly the Catholic doctrine, supported by the teaching of the inspired Scriptures. The examination of and commentary on a passage in Proverbs (viii. 22), from which the Arians made out a case in their favour, takes up one whole book of the treatise; several times he cites passages from the protagonists of the heresy, and the refutation of these forms a happy conclusion to the positive exposition of a doctrine that is founded on the Sacred Books.

Other works, such as *The Incarnation and against the Arians; On the Sentence: All things have been delivered into My hands;* and *An Exposition of the Faith*, though of less importance than the treatise we have been describing, specify many points of detail. Many more titles might be cited, for the literary inheritance left to us under the name of

Athanasius is considerable. But many of these are forgeries. It was to be expected that the authority of the great doctor should be abused in some circles, and anonymous works be attributed to him, his name being sometimes used to cloak such or such a heresy. The Apollinarists especially made use of this trick; a work, *On the Incarnation of God the Word*, and another, *That Christ is One*, emanated from them. Orthodox writers also made use of his name, the real authors remaining unknown, in such works as the fourth book of the treatise *Against the Arians;* a *Treatise on the Incarnation against Apollinaris;* five dialogues *On the Trinity;* two *Against the Macedonians*, and many others, which might be studied more closely than they have yet been.

There remain the exegetical and moral writings of Athanasius. *The Life of Saint Antony*, which is undoubtedly by him, is rather an edifying biography than a strict history. The authenticity of a treatise, *On Virginity*, is at least doubtful, and that of the exegetical fragments that bear his name uncertain. We know from ancient authors that the great Bishop found time to write *On the Titles of the Psalms; On Job;* and *On Ecclesiastes;* but scarcely anything remains of these works.

Little by little we have allowed ourselves to describe, in the form of a catalogue, the multiplied activity of Saint Athanasius. But no systematic or classified list could give anything but a false idea of his labours. When he wrote it was because he could not do otherwise, and judged that a book was a form of action. His whole life was directed by the one thought of defending the faith of the three hundred and eighteen Nicene Fathers; beyond that

he cared to know nothing. As bishop he mounted the breach and sounded the trumpet. It is useless, therefore, to undertake the praise of his language, his style or his literary qualities. When his natural eloquence carries him away, he is incomparable. This often happens, and it is sufficient to give Saint Athanasius a distinguished position in the history of Christian literature.

Serapion of Thmuis.—Amongst his contemporaries there are very few to be noticed. Serapion, Bishop of Thmuis, from 339 to about 360, is already known to us as the recipient of a letter from Saint Athanasius on the Holy Ghost. We owe to him a *Treatise against the Macedonians* and some letters, and a collection of prayers and liturgical formulas, called a *Euchologion*, published for the first time in 1899, is also attributed to Serapion, we hardly know why. This little book is of the greatest interest in the history of Christian worship.

The Monks.—Egypt is the land of solitaries. The monastic life began there and developed considerably during the fourth century. Naturally, the monks wrote little; they were not created for that. They have left us some letters and rules, more or less touched up by later writers. Saint Jerome knew of seven letters of Saint Antony (251-356), addressed to different monasteries, and we still possess a Rule of Saint Pachomius (about 290-346), translated into Latin by Saint Jerome, and some letters by an anonymous translator. To Macarius of Egypt (300-390) were attributed until lately fifty *Spiritual Homilies*, which would be important if their true origin were better established. Recent critics seem

to agree that they are the work of a Messalian heretic.

Evagrius Ponticus, born at Ibora in Pontus, about 345, is the most celebrated of the disciples of Macarius. He was ordained lector by Saint Basil and deacon by Saint Gregory Nazianzen. He did not quit the world till after the Council of Constantinople, when he went to Egypt and remained there to the end of his life. All his numerous works were written for monks, and treat of questions of the spiritual life. Ancient authors esteemed particularly the *Antirhetoric* or *Treatise on the Eight Vicious Thoughts,* which taught the solitaries to fight against gluttony, luxury, avarice, sadness, anger, sloth, envy and pride; *The Monk*, a collection of one hundred sentences for beginners; *The Gnostic*, fifty sentences for the more advanced; the *Prognostic*, six hundred ascetical maxims; *Maxims for Monks and Virgins*, etc. The memory of Evagrius has unfortunately suffered through the Origenistic quarrels with which he was mixed up, especially in the time of Justinian. Many of his works have disappeared, others have only been preserved in Syriac or Latin translations, and yet others have been so much altered that it is difficult to recognize them.

Didymus.—Like Evagrius, Didymus, since his death, has been accused of Origenism in certain of his writings. Moreover, many of his books have not been preserved, and we possess only a small number in the original text.

Didymus was probably born about 313. He became blind when quite a child; nevertheless, he studied so eagerly that he became one of the most

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learned men of his time. Amongst those who attended his lessons were Evagrius, Palladius and Saint Jerome. When he died, in 398, he had accomplished a great work and composed books on all questions interesting to theology and exegesis.

As a theologian Didymus wrote treatises *On the Sects; On the Holy Spirit; On the Death of Children; Against the Arians; Against Eunomius; On the Trinity; Commentaries on the* De Principiis *of Origen; Against the Manicheans; Of the Soul; Of the Faith;* and others. There remains to us of all these the treatise on the Holy Spirit, in a Latin translation by Saint Jerome; that on the Trinity in a single mutilated manuscript; possibly the books against Eunomius attributed to Saint Basil, and part of the treatise against the Manicheans.

As an exegetist Didymus commented on many of the Books of the Old and New Testaments. Lists of numerous fragments have come down to us under his name, which it would be difficult to criticize and which are of very mixed origin. A Commentary on the Catholic Epistles, translated at the wish of Cassiodorus, contains some passages from Didymus, but other portions belong to different authors.

Such extensive and varied labours suppose a remarkable application to work on the part of their author, and in fact Didymus appears as a faithful interpreter of tradition, but with a not very original mind, incapable of invention. He quotes many authors, particularly the profane writers, whose texts he borrows from the Anthologies; sometimes also he cites ecclesiastical writers, as Saint Basil. He also imitates a great deal, without acknowledging it, and though he rejects from Origen all that a Catholic at the end of the fourth century was bound

to reject, he preserves all that he may lawfully keep of the doctrine of a venerated master. His style of correction is monotonous and without eloquence; his mind is slow and works by constant repetition. But he is gentle in controversy, patient and generous, and he seeks to convince rather than condemn. He is truly pious, and, scattered over his writings are tender invocations to the Trinity, to Christ and to the Angels. He remains as a fine example of zeal for study, and his books enable us to get a pretty exact idea of theological thought on the morrow of the great Trinitarian controversies and the eve of the no less great Christological disputes.

CHAPTER VI

THE ANTIOCHENES: SYRIA AND PALESTINE

Eusebius. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem. The Antiochenes. Diodorus of Tarsus. Theodore of Mopsuestia. Saint John Chrysostom. Apollinaris of Laodicea. Saint Epiphanius. The Apostolic Constitutions.

PALESTINE is the country of ecclesiastical history: Hegesippus was born, and Julius Africanus taught there during many years. About the year 265 she gave birth to Eusebius of Cæsarea, the most illustrious historian of the ancient Church.

Eusebius.—He was a model scholar. His whole life was passed at Cæsarea; after completing his studies under the direction of the priest Dorotheus, one of the most learned men of the time, he was ordained and became a great friend of Pamphilus. Thenceforth he worked with him, revising Origen's works, enriching with new volumes the Library of Cæsarea and reading the old Christian authors. When the persecution broke out both Pamphilus and Eusebius were cast into prison, and employed their time in copying out the Bible and correcting faulty editions. Eusebius escaped the death which deprived him of his friend, and about 313 he was elected Bishop of Cæsarea. An indefatigable

student, he worked without intermission: history, geography, exegesis held no secrets for him. Arianism disturbed him for a time. All his connections, his education itself and the natural tendency of his mind inclined him to heresy. Nevertheless he subscribed to the Creed of Nicæa because the Emperor wished it. But he made no attempt to defend it when it was attacked; on the contrary, he assisted at the Councils that deposed the great defenders of orthodoxy, Eustathius of Antioch, Athanasius of Alexandria, and Marcellus of Ancyra. He was, in fact, destitute of passion, as of ambition. After the deposition of Eustathius Eusebius was offered the See of Antioch, but he refused it, preferring to remain at Cæsarea, with his Library. He studied to the end of his life and wrote as long as he was able. When he died, in 338-340, he had just finished a panegyric of Constantine, which must have been his last work.

Christian antiquity has known no more assiduous worker than Eusebius. Origen, perhaps, wrote more, but he wrote for the good of souls and as a part of his ministerial duty. Eusebius loved research for its own sake; he delighted to study ancient texts; it was pure happiness to him to discover some unpublished work and to improve upon it. No doubt he took some interest in the Church for which he claimed to work, but he seems to have been the first to believe it possible to serve her by the pen alone, and that she has no less need of historians and professional exegetists than of active workers. He loved peace, and sometimes accepted agreements and compromises that such men as Athanasius would have repelled with horror. Compared to the great Patriarch, Eusebius is

certainly a small man. But such a comparison is equally unjust to both. There is nothing in common between a man of action and a scholar. Nor must we forget that, having accepted the Creed of Nicæa, Eusebius never denied it, and he died in communion with the Church. Those who make him an Arian, and confuse him with his namesake of Nicomedia, are greatly mistaken. It is true that he never felt much attraction to the term "Consubstantial," to which his theological training disposed him to give a Sabellian interpretation; he dreaded above all to be dragged into the fray and to take part in the great controversies; his exaggerated love of peace certainly lowered his greatness of mind.

Eusebius was far from being a genius. He writes clearly, without much art, and scarcely ever with vivacity. He is more of an exact and detailed compiler than a great historian. During his reading he took references and made extracts, and these he inserted with care in his works. We must not expect from him either much criticism or philosophy. Nevertheless he can claim our gratitude and esteem. We scarcely dare to think how little we should have known of Christian antiquity if Eusebius had not written his *History*.

It is, in fact, *The Ecclesiastical History* that has made Eusebius' reputation. The work contains ten books in its present form and was not finished till 324. But it had been long in hand and there were two or three editions before the final one. Eusebius there relates the origin of Christianity and its development up to the eve of the Council of Nicæa; he insists on certain questions that particularly interest him, on the Episcopal Successions, on the Canon of the Scriptures, and on the

great writers, but on the other hand he omits a number of facts that we should greatly desire to know. The gaps in this work are immense; the entire West seems almost unknown to Eusebius, particularly from the time when its writers began to use Latin. The forty last years of the third century are dispatched in one chapter, without one proper name or any precise facts. It would be no less easy than useless to multiply criticisms. There are so many things in this *History*, so many valuable extracts from ancient authors, so many names, titles of works, details and facts, that we must be content to read and study it, to draw profit, without complaining over-much of its evident imperfections.

The *History* is completed by the *Chronicle*, which, as its name implies, is intended to furnish the reader with the elements of a comparative chronology of every event in human history. The idea was not new; it had been started by Hippolytus and Julius Africanus. Eusebius took up the work of his predecessors on a new basis, and after having, in the first part, fixed the foundations of chronology, he establishes, in the second, the exact dates of events. The work is one of extraordinary erudition: his calculations are often erroneous, the more so that the original text is lost and we are obliged to have recourse to Latin and Armenian translations, where the copyists have multiplied the faults: but it is useful to consult, especially for the Christian period, in the revised and completed edition of Saint Jerome.

The *Acts of the Ancient Martyrs* and *The Martyrs of Palestine* belong to both history and apologetics. The first of these was a collection, as complete as possible, of the documents that Eusebius had

collected, on the martyrs of the three first centuries, down to the great persecution. This work has long disappeared. But we still possess *The Martyrs of Palestine*, the precious narrative of an eye-witness, thanks to which we can follow in detail the execution of the persecuting edicts in one province of the Eastern Empire.

The four books of the *Life of Constantine* belong to the historian's last years. The aged Bishop was unwilling to die before having written in praise of the great Emperor who had honoured him with his sympathy. Therefore he composed a work which is a beautiful testimony of gratitude. But we must not look in it for a history, properly so-called. The author finds space to describe at length the beginnings of Arianism, without, however, naming either Arius or Saint Athanasius; the work is a triumph of reticence and circumlocution.

All history, in fact, whether of the Church or the Emperor, is directed by Eusebius to apologetics. But besides his historical writings he wrote many *Apologies*. The *Preparatio Evangelica* and the *Demonstratio Evangelica* are as the two wings of one diptych, in which first the pagans and then the Jews are refuted, by means of numerous testimonies that have been preserved for us from the precious debris of profane literature. The *Eclogæ Propheticæ*, a collection of prophecies realized in the person of Christ, at first formed part of a *General Elementary Introduction;* the *Theophania*, or *Divine Manifestations*, preserved in a Syriac version, is a repetition of the *Demonstratio Evangelica*. The books *Against Hierocles*, and *Against Porphyry* are lost.

Like Christian antiquity, the Bible itself has found

a curious interpreter in Eusebius. When he explains the Books of the Old and New Testaments, as a faithful disciple of Origenism he seeks the allegorical interpretation. But his scholarly character resumes its sway when he discusses the geography of Palestine and carefully identifies the names of places mentioned in the Holy Scriptures. Such is the precise object of the *Topics*, or *Onomasticon*, of which we have a translation, completed by Saint Jerome. One hardly reads these books, which are scarcely more than catalogues, but they are indispensable for consultation and furnish valuable information on Palestine and its topographical conditions in the fourth century.

It is not surprising that a positive mind like that of Eusebius, exclusively occupied with scholarship, should not be greatly interested in theological problems. But his indifference seems to have been so great that it is almost a consolation to learn that towards the end of his life the Bishop of Cæsarea found time to refute Sabellianism in two treatises, *Against Marcellus of Ancyra*, and *On the Theology of the Church*. The authenticity of these writings has been vainly contested. They exactly express what we learn elsewhere of Eusebius' doctrine, sympathetic with Arianism without being frankly Arian, and especially hostile to the confusion of the Divine Persons, which is properly the error of Sabellius.

Eusebius was succeeded at Cæsarea, from 340 to 366 by a certain Acacius, who seems to have been a fertile writer on Scriptural subjects. We only possess some fragments of his work in the Catenæ.

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem.—We know more of the literary activity of Eusebius' contemporary, Saint Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem from 348 to 386. His was a strange career. He belonged, both by tradition and by preference, to that third party, which, fundamentally orthodox, condemned the Arianism of Arius, and even that of the Eusebians, but who, through fear of the Sabellian error, felt almost as much distrust of the "Consubstantial" doctrine of Nicæa, which they did not understand.

Having been elected bishop by the influence of Acacius, Cyril soon became embroiled with the Anomæans, who drove him into exile on three different occasions. He did not return definitively to his episcopal city till after the death of the Emperor Valens, in 379; his last years were passed in the joyous calm of triumph.

Cyril's authentic works consist of twenty-four *Catecheses*, which must have been preached immediately before his promotion to the Episcopate, that is to say, in 348. They are elementary instructions for candidates for baptism. A preparatory instruction is succeeded by a more developed and sometimes rather prolix explanation of the Creed; then come the *Mystagogical Instructions* which treat of the three Sacraments of Christian initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. They possess a spontaneous eloquence, natural, frank and sympathetic. Without being a great writer, which he did not seek to be, Saint Cyril was one of the best preachers of the fourth century.

Eusebius, Bishop of Emesa from 341 to 359, was Cyril's contemporary. He was a great exegetist and fine preacher. His Scriptural writings have perished, but a series of sermons in a Latin

translation have been recently discovered, though not yet published.

The Antiochenes.—Whilst Eusebius and Acacius ruled over the Christians of Cæsarea the Church of Antioch was profoundly troubled by Arian controversies. At the time of the Nicene Council she had for bishop, Eustathius, transferred from Beræa in 324, a declared anti-Origenist, an ardent Consubstantialist, and a great opponent of Arius and his partisans. Eustathius wrote much; letters, sermons, a treatise *Against the Arians*, and, his principal work, a treatise on the Witch of Endor, called *De Engastrimytho*, as well as some Biblical commentaries. His writings, most of which are lost, gained him many enemies in the camp of the Eusebians, and in 330 a Council deposed him and put in his place an Arian of the first water.

The heretical successors of Saint Eustathius had little time to give to literature; nor was it necessary, for they had at hand hired Sophists, quite willing to defend the Arian theses. Asterius of Cappadocia had constituted himself an advocate of Arianism from its beginning; until 341, and perhaps beyond, he led a wandering and needy life, employing his leisure in composing apologies for the new heresy. After him Aetius, who had been ordained deacon at Antioch, about 350, pushed the doctrines of Arius to extremes. He became the protagonist of the most absolute and stupidly intransigent Anomæanism; he worked out at least three hundred syllogisms to prove that the Son of God was a creature. Forty-seven of these are still extant.

The disciple of Aetius, Eunomius, also came from Cappadocia, and was a deacon at Antioch before

he was made Bishop of Cyzicus, about 341. He had the doubtful honour of writing an *Apology* for Anomæanism that was refuted by Saint Basil, to which he retorted by a second *Apology*, entitled *A Defence of the Defence*, to which, later, Saint Gregory of Nyssa replied.

Until about 360 the orthodox of Antioch scarcely dared to raise their voices in defence of the Nicene Faith, but they recovered more liberty and courage during the Episcopate of Saint Meletius, the friend of Saint Basil, a prudent and moderate man, who had much to suffer, both from the heretics and the adherents of his rival, Paulinus. We know his doctrine through a sermon and some letters.

Diodorus of Tarsus.—Before the arrival of Meletius some of the faithful of Antioch had succeeded in gathering together under the direction of two devoted priests, Flavian and Diodorus. The former, who succeeded Meletius in 381, has no place in literary history. Not so Diodorus. He was an Antiochene by birth, and after studying at Athens, returned to his native country and entered a monastery. But the sufferings of his brethren drew him thence and he entered on an active life. With untiring energy he defended the Faith of Nicæa against the Arians. Exiled under Valens in 372, he returned to Antioch in 378, and was then made Bishop of Tarsus, in Cilicia. Until his death (in 391?) he appears as one of the lights of orthodoxy.

Diodorus deserves this reputation by his knowledge, which was immense, embracing all the sciences of his time, by his disinterested zeal, by an eloquence that filled the crowds with enthusiasm, and by writings that spread the true Faith. He

commented on nearly all the Books of the Old and New Testaments, endeavouring especially to bring out clearly the literal sense, and explained the principles of exegesis in a treatise *On the Difference between Theory and Allegory*. He refuted the astrologers, the Melchisedechians, the Jews, Porphyry, Photinus and Paul of Samosata, Sabellius and Marcellus of Ancyra. He was always in the breach. The catalogue of his writings, drawn up by Suidas and Ebedjesus, is truly surprising.

Of these many productions only fragments remain, of which the most important belong to a still unedited Psalter. Before very long the writings of Diodorus became suspect and he was regarded as a precursor of Nestorius. It must be confessed that this is not a rash judgment. Obliged as he was to deal with the most difficult Christological problems in terms that were not yet sufficiently defined, desirous of safeguarding the complete Humanity in Christ denied by Apollinaris and his disciples, Diodorus sometimes employed inexact expressions and so merited the oblivion into which his works have fallen. But it is only just to add that his intentions were always upright, and his attitude towards the official Church was irreproachable. It is true that he was the master of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the true spiritual ancestor of Nestorianism, but Saint John Chrysostom was also his disciple and never ceased to testify unreserved admiration for his former master.

Theodore of Mopsuestia.—He was born in Antioch, about 350, of Christian parents. After frequenting the School of Libanius, he remained the pupil and friend of Diodorus almost up to his

consecration as Bishop of Mopsuestia in Cilicia, in 392. We know little of his life, except a characteristic incident of his having given hospitality in 418, to Julian of Eclanum, the ardent defender of Pelagianism. He died in 428, in communion with the Catholic Church, on the eve of the tempest that the teaching of Nestorius was to raise in Constantinople and throughout the East.

Theodore was a prolific and powerful writer. He wrote commentaries on many portions of the Bible of such acuteness that the Nestorian Churches regarded him as their greatest interpreter. He certainly pushed certain principles and opinions to extremes, and his extravagantly literal exegesis opened an easy way to rationalism. His theory of inspiration reduces the work of the Holy Ghost to a minimum. His writings often manifest a narrow and rigid spirit, unable to adapt his iron rule to the legitimate exigencies of life, and preferring his personal opinions to the doctrines received by the Church.

The same spirit is evident in what remains of his theological works—not much, in fact, of an immense collection. The most important of his writings seems to have been a treatise *On the Incarnation.* A Syriac version of this was discovered, and lost again during the Great War. There were also books *On the Holy Ghost; Against Eunomius; Against the Magic of the Persians; Against Apollinaris;* a treatise, *Contra dicentes: peccatum naturæ inesse*, and many others.

Most of the extant fragments of Theodore's doctrinal writings were transcribed by his adversaries, and contain his least acceptable ideas. They, however, suffice to reveal a theologian, dry and reasonable to excess, and a pitiless dialectician; the

Councils that condemned him were not mistaken as to the true meaning of his doctrine.

Saint John Chrysostom.—Very different from Theodore was his fellow-countryman, his contemporary and his friend, John of Constantinople, on whom posterity has bestowed the surname of Chrysostom—"Golden-mouthed."

His was an impressive and affecting character, with a tender and delicate soul, vibrating with every emotion, a courageous heart, severe to himself, pitiless towards vice, shuddering in the presence of evil; but at the same time his mind was insufficiently prepared for action and he lived in perpetual suffering, the suffering of loyal men who rush boldly into the strife and find themselves confronted by masked enemies, against whom their candour is vain.

Chrysostom was by nature a contemplative, and his active life should have been confined to his eloquence. Condemned to the Episcopate, in the midst of most complicated circumstances, he was crushed by powerful opposition, when perhaps others, such as Nectarius or Atticus, might have succeeded with a little more patience and good humour. His life was a continual struggle with adversaries who were far from being his equals, and who had no scruples about attacking him. Such a life offers to those who love truth and virtue an admirable example of a valour that nothing can overcome.

Chrysostom was born at Antioch about 344; he studied rhetoric with Libanius and philosophy with Andragatius. In 370 he was baptized and ordained lector. But he desired a more austere life, and in 374 retired into a solitude, where for six years he

practised such severe austerities that he ruined his health. In 380 he returned to Antioch and in 386 he was raised to the priesthood by Bishop Flavian. Then began the most brilliant and the happiest period of his life. In full possession of his powers, he was charged with the duty of preaching to the faithful. He had all that was necessary for success in this ministry; profound faith, devouring zeal, a warm and yet familiar eloquence, rich with the flowers of rhetoric and a thorough knowledge of souls. He loved the Antiochenes and was beloved by them. His *Sermons on the Statues* were powerful enough to quell a sedition and restore courage to a despairing multitude. They mark the apogee of his career.

In 397 he had to give up his teaching. There was need of a bishop for Constantinople and Saint John Chrysostom was chosen. But his eloquence could not work the miracles in the imperial capital that it had done at Antioch. The evil was too deeply rooted, and instead of attacking it openly it would be necessary to manœuvre, and even to temporize; but of this Chrysostom was incapable. With naïve frankness he attacked the enemy; he openly opposed the Empress, her courtiers, evil-living priests, the rich and avaricious. But in vain did the populace side with him, they were helpless against those in power, and before long the bishops took sides with the latter. Theophilus of Alexandria accused him of imaginary faults, and he was deposed at the "Synod of the Oak," in 403. He was exiled, but recalled in a few days. He could not, however, change his tactics, and another coalition was soon formed against him. In 404 he was sent to Cucusus, a desolate place on the frontier of Armenia, but he

continued to correspond with his flock in Constantinople and was sent farther off. He was to be taken to Pithyus, at the extreme boundary of the empire, near the Caucasus. But his health broke down and he died on the way, at Comana, on the 14th of September, 407, his last words being: "Glory be to God for all things."

Few lives, perhaps, have been more tragic, but none fuller or more fruitful. Saint John Chrysostom remains to posterity as the prince of Christian orators. Nearly all his work consists of sermons. A few small treatises were written before he entered on his oratical career, the most celebrated being the *Discourse on the Priesthood*, which has often been read by priests, to their admiration and spiritual consolation. To this must be added three *opuscula* on the monastic life; an *Adhortatio ad Stagirium*, on the trials of the spiritual life; two writings on *Widowhood*, and one on *Virginity*. They are all written for special occasions, to friends of the author, as encouragements to the practice of virtue, and they reveal a profound knowledge of the human soul.

The letters, dated from the Saint's places of exile, are like a continuation of his sermons, most of them short, but strong and courageous, worthy of the great soul, whom no adversity can crush, and who, in spite of his sufferings, remains sufficiently calm to console his disciples.

Between the treatises and the letters we must place the important list of his Homilies, or Sermons. A great number of these explain the Holy Scriptures, that inexhaustible source of moral teaching and exhortations to holiness. In this way Saint Chrysostom comments on most of the Sacred Books,

from Genesis to the Epistle to the Hebrews. Saint Paul is an object of special predilection; he returns constantly to the great Apostle's Epistles, which he explains in detail to his hearers, both of Antioch and Constantinople, drawing admirable counsels therefrom. No one has known better how to use the inspired writings for the spiritual formation of Christians. Others of his discourses are panegyrics in honour of the ancient Christian heroes, especially those of Antioch: Ignatius, Babylas, Lucian, Eustathius, and even of the later glories of the Church, as Diodorus of Tarsus. Some of the Homilies are doctrinal, in refutation of the Jews, the Anomæans and other heretics, whilst others again relate to current events; such are the Homilies on the Statues, on the disgrace of Eutropius, on the exile of Saturninus and Aurelian.

These discourses possess great charm. They are written in mellow and harmonious language, with many metaphors, a little lengthy perhaps, but always adapted to their hearers and to the needs of the moment. The Saint's teaching is austere, but clothed with so much grace that it does not terrify, and it is made attractive by the preacher's example. Saint John began to do ere he taught; he demanded nothing but what he himself practised.

Later centuries have imitated this inimitable preacher. Not content with copying and repeating his sermons, his admirers have brought out under his name quantities of worthless stuff, in very bad taste, hoping thus to impose upon the public. Our manuscripts and editions are full of these pseudo-epigraphs. One of the most necessary labours of the learned would be to separate the wheat from the chaff.

Contemporary with Saint John Chrysostom we may name two bishops, Antiochus of Ptolemais and Severian of Gabala, who seem to have been very popular preachers. They are little known, but are not without merit; though we are inclined to despise them, as flatterers of those in power and adversaries of Saint John, and though this may not affect their literary value, it certainly diminishes their moral excellence.

Apollinaris of Laodicea.—Whilst Diodorus was teaching at Antioch, with the orthodox members of the Syrian capital surrounding his lector's chair, Apollinaris, the Bishop of Laodicea, was proposing to the faithful of the latter city an exactly contrary Christological doctrine and, though perhaps unconsciously, was opening the way for the Monophysite heresy.

Apollinaris was of Egyptian origin. His father, the Elder Apollinaris, had left Alexandria and settled at Antioch, where he taught grammar, whilst at the same time exercising his priestly functions. Apollinaris the Younger, then only a Reader, was professor of rhetoric. Both father and son were learned men, a good deal attached to pagan literature, for which they were reproved and even excommunicated by the Bishop, George. The latter was suspected of Arianism, and when he condemned the Apollinarists they figured before the world as the defenders of orthodoxy, and became the friends of Saint Athanasius. Under the favour of such a protector the Nicene party elected Apollinaris the Younger Bishop of Laodicea in 362.

An edict of Julian the Emperor had forbidden to the younger Christians the study of pagan literature.

In compensation for this deprivation the new Bishop and his father reconstructed the Scriptures on classical models and wrote epics and dramas from Genesis, the Psalms, etc. But Julian did not live long, and then the writers returned to more serious labours. The Bishop set himself to study theology, which one cannot but regret, for it led him into serious error.

For some years his doctrine was not sufficiently understood to cause disquiet. He denied that Our Lord had a human intelligence; He had a soul which lived and felt, but the place of the intellect and spirit were supplied by the Eternal Word. But Apollinaris was prudent and dissimulated, clothing his real teaching in vague and obscure terms. By 373 or 374, however, when Saint Jerome arrived to study exegesis with him, his doctrines became better known, and in 377 they were condemned by Pope Saint Damasus. The condemnation was repeated in 381, at the Council of Constantinople, but Apollinaris refused to submit and died unreconciled in or after 385.

He was a learned man, a great dialectician and a tireless worker. Saint Jerome tells us that he wrote innumerable books on the Holy Scriptures, but they are nearly all lost. His Apologies, *Against Porphyry*, and *On the Truth*, against Julian the Apostate, have also disappeared, as well as his refutations of Origen, Diodorus of Tarsus and Flavian. But we possess several theological works, in which he exposes his own doctrine. In order to escape the surveillance of the imperial police or the condemnation of the orthodox bishops, these works were very soon circulated under the names of some of the greatest orthodox writers: Saint Gregory

Thaumaturgus, Pope Julius, Saint Athanasius and others have thus been made to appear as supporters of the Apollinarist errors. Many upright men, like Saint Cyril of Alexandria, were for long deceived by these works, and it was not till the sixth century that the anonymous author of a book entitled *Adversus fraudes Apollinaristarum* laid bare the trickery. It is owing to this deceit that we have an *Exposition of Faith*, attributed to Saint Gregory; books on *The Unity of Christ*, and *On Faith and the Incarnation*, under the name of Pope Julius, and the treatises attributed to Saint Athanasius, *That Christ is One*, and *On the Incarnation of God the Word*. Besides these the heresiarch's adversaries have transcribed numerous fragments from his writings, particularly from his *Proof of the Divine Incarnation in the likeness of Man.*

All these works show us a writer of very high intelligence, assisted by a profound knowledge of Holy Scripture. They manifest at the same time a subtle mind and an obstinate reasoner. These good and bad qualities, serving as they did, an indomitable pride, explain both Apollinaris' heresy and his obstinacy in persevering in it. What this Bishop of Laodicea needed, to make him a true Christian, was submission to the Church and faithful adherence to Catholic tradition.

After his death some of his disciples continued to spread his doctrine under borrowed names. Vitalis, Timothy and Jobius are among the best known, but there are others, to whose pseudo-epigraphical works we owe our knowledge of Apollinarianism.

Saint Epiphanius.—One of the first adversaries

of Apollinaris was Saint Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, or Constantia, the capital of the Island of Cyprus. His is one of the strangest characters in Christian antiquity; the great opponent of heresies and an untiring avenger of every kind of wrong.

He was born about 315 at Besanduk, near Eleutheropolis, in Judea, of a Christian family. He was attracted early to the ascetic life and went to Egypt to study in the school of the solitaries. On his return home he was ordained priest and founded a monastery at Besanduk, of which he became head. He was then twenty, and for thirty years he spent a most austere and mortified life in his monastery. Gradually his reputation for sanctity was spread abroad, and in 367 he was torn from his monastic life and made Bishop of Salamis. Thenceforth he had but one care: to defend orthodoxy before and against everyone. No heresy had a more implacable enemy than Epiphanius.

He was chiefly insistent against Origenism, which he regarded as the principle of all errors. About 376 he became aware of Apollinarianism and condemned it. In 382 he went to Rome to defend the cause of Paulinus of Antioch, and in 394 we find him in Palestine once more. He was now fighting against Origen, his works, his memory and his followers, and was fiercer and more passionate than ever, and this lasted for some years. In 403 he went to Constantinople to combat the pretended heresy of Saint John Chrysostom, in whom Epiphanius believed he had discovered a disguised Origenist. It was his last journey, for he died on his way home, having perhaps recognized his imprudence in siding with Saint John's adversaries.

Few men of his time were more learned than

Epiphanius. He knew Greek, Syriac, Hebrew, Coptic and even a little Latin. He had read many of the writings of the old Christian masters, and was particularly familiar with Saints Hippolytus and Irenæus. He knew the works of all the heretics of the fourth century; Arius, Eunomius, Aetius, Basil of Ancyra, etc. But all this learning was used exclusively to confound the teachers of falsehood and the founders of sects. In 374 he published the *Ancoratus*, or "The Well-Anchored"—the Christian firmly fixed against the storms of error; an exposition of Catholic doctrine and a summary refutation of all contemporary errors. About the year 377 he brought out his great work, the *Panarion*, or "Medicine-Chest," i.e., a stock of remedies against the poison of heresy. Here he combats eighty heresies, symbolized by the King's wives in the Canticle of Canticles. In this work the writer is not always very accurate, and he does not inquire carefully into the doctrines he opposes. In order to carry out his symbolism he increases the number of theories and creates some that had never been sustained. In many instances Saint Hippolytus is his chief, and sometimes his only guide. His learning is not equal to his goodwill. But the book furnishes very valuable information on the history of the fourth century, and reproduces documents and traditions otherwise unknown to us. We owe to it some important texts on the Meletian schism, the Anomæans and many others.

Epiphanius' reputation as an historian rests chiefly on the *Panarion*. Two short treatises of Biblical archæology, *On Weights and Measures*, and *On the Twelve Stones*, are scarcely remembered. But the work on heresies can be scarcely sufficiently

consulted. It is badly written and put together; long and trifling refutations and many errors disfigure it; Epiphanius' intelligence was not of the highest order. But he is sincere, which is much, and what is more, he has an intense love for the Church.

Perhaps he did not in life render as great a service to the cause of orthodoxy as he imagined, but since his death he has been an indispensable assistant to historians in the study of heresies, and for this alone every literary worker owes him a debt of gratitude.

The Apostolic Constitutions.—Many other writers of Palestine and Syria might be named, if we wished to give a complete list, rather than a general view. But we cannot omit the *Apostolic Constitutions*, one of the most characteristic works of Syria towards the end of the fourth century.

We have already seen that Syria was the country of liturgical and disciplinary regulations. Such are the *Constitutions*, adapted to the fresh conditions of life. The six first books reproduce, in an extensively modified and interpolated compilation, the *Didascalia of the Apostles*. Chapters I-XXXII of the seventh book are a similar adaptation of the *Didache*, whilst the Chapters XXXIII-XLIX contain evidently ancient formulas and prayers. The eighth book only is original, and furnishes an interesting account of the liturgy in use in the compiler's Church. It seems that this unknown compiler was not strictly orthodox. Some critics consider him to have been a semi-Arian, others an Apollinarist, and he is supposed to be identical with the interpolator of the Ignatian Epistles. Nevertheless these *Constitu-*

tions are most valuable for canonists and historians, for they contain information of great importance. The book purports to be the work of Saint Clement of Rome, who received his instructions from the Apostles, and the author seems to have intended to draw up a regular code for the use of the Syrian Churches. But he was not taken seriously, and in 692 the Quinisext, or Trullan Council accepted the eighty-five canons at the end of the book and rejected the rest as being interpolated with heresies. The *Constitutions* were not known in the West, and it is only in recent times that scholars have been interested in them and have studied the copious literature of which they form a portion.

CHAPTER VII

ASIA MINOR AND THRACE

The Beginning of the Fourth Century. Saint Basil. Saint Gregory Nazianzen. Saint Gregory of Nyssa. Amphilochius of Iconium. Secondary Writers.

The first half of the fourth century is rather a dull period in the literary history of Asia Minor and Thrace, and nearly all the native writers whose names have been preserved were heretics.

Marcellus of Ancyra undoubtedly belonged to the Nicene party, but some of his expressions are strange, and it is easy to discover in them errors like those of Sabellius. He wrote a treatise *On the Submission of the Lord*, a great work, in refutation of the Sophist, Asterius, which, in its turn, was refuted by Eusebius of Cæsarea, to whom we owe the preservation of all the fragments that we possess.

After 335 Marcellus was replaced in the See of Ancyra by a physician named Basil. In 358 he became the recognized leader of the Homoiousian party and enjoyed a rapid celebrity. He drew up a long memorial in the name of his party and was their spokesman at the Council of Ancyra, whose resolutions he formulated in a synodical letter. He published a work against Marcellus and a treatise *On Virginity*, which may have been preserved under

the name of Saint Basil. Then he disappears from history, and died in obscurity about 373.

From Cappadocia came the Sophist, Asterius, Eunomius of Constantinople, Ursacius of Singidunum, Auxentius of Milan, and others, who, in countries far from their birthplace, exercised many functions in the ecclesiastical world of the Arian party.

To Thrace belong two Bishops of Heraclea: Theodore (335-355), a prolific exegetist. Saint Jerome praises his literal interpretation of the Sacred Text, of which we possess some fragments; and the historian, Sabinus, who compiled a collection of the Councils of the fourth century down to the year 378; Sozomen has made great use of this work, and its loss is much to be deplored for the history of that time.

It was, however, from Cappadocia that, soon after 360, came the new birth of theology, and it was she who gave to the Christian world some of its most distinguished orators. Three men, closely united in affection, formed in the same school, animated by the same spirit of faith and almost equally endowed with brilliant qualities, were chosen by Providence for this great work—Saint Basil of Cæsarea, his brother, Saint Gregory of Nyssa and the friend of both, Saint Gregory Nazianzen. Their temperaments and characters were widely different. Perhaps no one of them alone could have fulfilled the task that was set them, but the three together accomplished it, supported by other faithful companions. It is thanks to them that orthodoxy finally triumphed over Arianism in the East.

Saint Basil.—The first to enter the lists was

Basil. He was born at Cæsarea in Cappadocia, of Christian parents; his paternal grandmother, Macrina, had been under the guidance of Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus, and the father of his mother, Emmelia, was a martyr during the great persecution. It was amidst such recollections as these that Basil grew up, with his nine brothers and sisters. He pursued his first studies at Cæsarea, under his father, who was a distinguished rhetorician; then he went to Constantinople and Athens to finish his education. The years he passed in the latter city were fruitful and happy, for there he met Gregory, his almost lifelong friend. Together the two young men attended the schools of rhetoric and were passionately devoted to the study of eloquence: together, also, they resolved to serve God in a life of perfection.

Basil was the first to carry out this resolution. After a long journey through Egypt, Mesopotamia and Syria, he settled himself on the borders of the Iris, with some monks, desirous, like himself, of solitude and sanctity. Gregory joined him there for a time, and nothing seemed wanting to their happiness. They studied Origen, and, together, published a selection of his writings, under the title of *Philocalia*. They prayed and worked, sheltered from the evil doings of men.

But such a life could not last. In 380 Basil accompanied his Bishop, Dianius, to Constantinople: this was his entrance into public life. A few years later he was ordained priest by Eusebius, the successor of Dianius, and in 370 became, in his turn, Bishop of Cæsarea.

Henceforth his life was to be one of incessant struggle. The situation in the East had never been

more disturbed. The Emperor Valens favoured Arianism, and the orthodox bishops were everywhere exiled. The Christian Church of Antioch was divided by a lamentable schism, which had its echoes even in Rome. Apollinarianism was beginning to cause disquiet. The Divinity of the Holy Ghost was being made the subject of passionate debates where charity was sometimes forgotten. Basil faced all these difficulties; his courage, benevolence and popularity held Valens in check and he did not dare to drive the Bishop from Cæsarea. The latter firmly upheld the rights of Meletius of Antioch; he wrote against the Apollinarist errors; he defended the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, whilst avoiding all awkward compromises of orthodoxy, or on the other hand, frightening the ignorant simplicity of souls of good-will. But it was a rough task. He had to break with some of his dearest friends, to be misunderstood by those to whom he had looked for support, and even to find the necessary confidence of Rome lacking.

Added to all this, Basil suffered from weak health and an intense sensitiveness which would be exasperated at the contradictions, the incapacity, indifference, or the cowardice of his followers. When he died, on the 1st of January, 379, he had realized none of his projects. He seemed to be definitively vanquished. But his defeat was only apparent: on the morrow of his death his cause triumphed; but he was not there to see it.

Basil's whole literary work was directed by his practical activity. He was above everything a governor. Born to command men no less than to dominate events, in the very beginning of his

career he had drawn up rules for the monks. Even in solitude he organized and directed. *The Longer Monastic Rules* and *The Shorter Monastic Rules*, composed before he was a priest, are not entirely original; they are partly taken from the experiences of the older monks of Egypt and elsewhere; they resume and codify more or less traditional usages. Nevertheless they bear very clear marks of Basil's spirit. Such as he was, methodical, precise and wise, when he instructed his companions on the banks of the Iris, so he remained throughout his episcopate, when he had to solve some of the gravest problems of the Church.

We gain an exact picture of his interior life from his letters. They touch upon all subjects, and are addressed to many different correspondents; their tone varies from familiar to grave, and they carry us on through the whole of his active life, from 357 to 378. They should be read by anyone who wishes to have a clear idea of the life of a bishop in the fourth century, and of the multiplicity of cares that possess him. They reveal, too, Basil's sad and troubled soul, with its disappointments and disillusions, but also his unconquerable fidelity to what he regards as his duty.

The Homilies show us the priestly side of his character: many of them certainly date from the time of his ordination, such as the celebrated Homily on the *Hexœmeron*, an explanation of the first five days of creation, with thirteen Homilies on the Psalms. The Commentary on Isaias, a collection of homilies, is certainly his though its authenticity was for long considered doubtful. Amongst his sermons one, numbered 22, is of particular interest: *On the Study of Pagan*

Literature. Basil there shows his perfect understanding of souls, and at the same time expresses a just appreciation of the ancient classical writers.

Basil has left us two important theological works. The first, *Against Eunomius*, includes three books demonstrating the Consubstantiality of the Son of God and the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. The second treatise is also *On the Holy Spirit*, and proves that the Holy Ghost is God, against the Pneumatomachi, or Macedonians, who taught that He was a simple creature.

Nothing is obsolete in the holy Bishop's works. He still delights us by his free and unaffected style, by his sublime thought, and above all by the character of the man as it there reveals itself. Almost on the morrow of his death Saint Basil received the surname of "Great." The centuries have ratified this homage, which few bishops have so well deserved.

Saint Gregory Nazianzen.—By the side of Saint Basil appears the gentle Gregory Nazianzen, for many years his closest friend, though, later, separated by an estrangement that was never healed. The two men form a complete contrast; Basil was a man of action, a leader and organizer; Gregory was an orator, whose work lay in his speech, which others had to develop into action. His sensitive soul shrank from responsibility, and he would flee from the possible consequences of a principle he had so eloquently expounded. It seems a strange contradiction that this marvellous orator should have been placed in circumstances where he was forced to take energetic steps: he took them, as he was bound to do, and then fled, appalled. His

whole life was a dramatic duel between a strong and vigorous mind and a will doubtful of itself.

Like Basil, Gregory was a Cappadocian, having been born at Arianzus, in or about 326. He studied rhetoric at Cæsarea in Cappadocia, then in Cæsarea of Palestine, at Alexandria and Athens. Thus the best schools of antiquity gave their last lessons to the greatest Christian orators. In 360 Gregory was baptized, and joined Basil in his solitude by the Iris, but in 361 he was obliged to return to active life. His father, the Bishop of Nazianzus, was old and needed an auxiliary. He insisted on ordaining Gregory, and in spite of his great unwillingness, the latter had to share in the administration of the diocese for several years. Gradually he became accustomed to the work, and found in it the peace and tranquillity he needed. But with Basil's elevation to the See of Cæsarea Gregory's troubles began. Basil wanted to use his friends in his own way for the Church's interests, and he forced the best of them all to become the Bishop of Sasima, a small dusty town, little better than a postal station, that he wished to make into a bishopric. But Gregory was scarcely consecrated when he fled, without even visiting Sasima, and returned to Nazianzus, in time to attend his father's deathbed. After this event he considered himself free to realize his former dream of an ascetic life, and returned to the solitude where he spent the next four or five years.

Then came what one may call the miracle of his life. In 379 Gregory was called to Constantinople. This city had long been the fortress of Arianism, and the orthodox party, left without pastors, was diminishing day by day, in numbers and influence.

But they had heard of Gregory, of his knowledge, his virtue and eloquence; would he not be the saviour of the little community of the faithful? He answered their appeal and arrived, with no other mandate than his zeal; and for several months the Church of the Resurrection thrilled with the sound of his wonderful eloquence. The Arians rapidly lost their power; the orthodox party regained courage and finally triumphed; on the 27th of November, 380, Gregory was solemnly installed by Theodosius as Patriarch of Constantinople.

A few months passed, and then Gregory resigned his archbishopric and returned to Cappadocia. He was overcome by the difficulties of his situation; by the opposition of his adversaries and the divisions in the episcopate, and his timidity bent before the storm: his successor, Nectarius, a man of mediocre quality, succeeded by prudent temporizing, where Gregory had failed.

He returned to his birthplace, Arianzus, and spent his remaining years in writing. He wrote poems in which he recounted the adventures of his life, and lived in such obscurity that even the exact date of his death is unknown. It may be placed between 389 and 390.

Gregory's literary work is a faithful mirror of his life and character. The best known are his sermons, to the number of forty-five, and undoubtedly some of the most beautiful things in Christian literature. They contain a great deal of rhetoric, particularly in the funeral discourses and panegyrics. Discourses of this kind have a style of their own, in accordance with received text-books, and should conform to strict rules. Gregory knows this, and takes care to show his hearers that he has been trained in the

best schools; he therefore prepares these discourses with great care, omitting none of those commonplaces that belong to good taste. Such compositions are necessarily rather cold in tone, and one could wish that the sermon in honour of Saint Basil, the friend of his youth and riper age, had shown more trace of personal emotion. But the language is pure, elegant, harmonious, the sonorous periods artistically balanced. Gregory spared no trouble to make his formal discourses real masterpieces of oratory, and in this he succeeded.

But his theological sermons are far superior, especially the five great *Theological Discourses,* preached at Constantinople during the heroic months of Gregory's life. They treat of the most difficult subjects of Christian doctrine; the Trinity, the Innascibility of the Father, the Consubstantiality of the Son, the Procession of the Holy Ghost. But the orator does not seek only to be a metaphysician, or even to comment on the classical texts of Holy Scripture. God is to him an object of love, far rather than of subtle dialectics. And these discourses are penetrated with a depth of feeling by which it is difficult not to be carried away.

The most finished of Gregory's oratorical works is undoubtedly the last: the supreme farewell to Constantinople, to the Church of the Resurrection, to his clergy and faithful, to the Trinity Itself. This time he pours out his whole soul and reveals the cruel suffering of separation. This admirable discourse is one of the masterpieces of human eloquence.

Saint Gregory's correspondence is also full of interest, but it does not possess all the charm of Basil's. Gregory is too much of an orator to be

perfectly simple; his letters are still compositions. In one of them he lays down rules of style, such as he had learnt from the rhetoricians, and in fact he had clearly not sufficiently forgotten these rules, and applied them with a too scrupulous fidelity, even when addressing his friends. His style is a little affected and at times over-elaborate, when one would prefer it to be more natural and free. However, this correspondence is rich in all kinds of information, and can be utilized with equal profit for history and theology.

During the long years of his retreat at Arianzus Gregory employed his leisure in writing verses. He had always had a taste for poetry, and now that he had little else to do, he took to writing it himself, not without facility and grace. He essayed all kinds of verse, epigrams, epitaphs, elegies, didactic and moral poems, and employed all the classical metres. He was almost the first of Greek-speaking Christians to write in verse. He knew this, and was proud of it, so necessary did he deem it that Christians should have no cause to envy the heathen, even in the domain of art. We could not say that these poems are worthy of admiration. Most of them "smell of the midnight oil."[1] The work of an eminent mind, they are wanting in the glow of true inspiration. But were the subjects treated of by the venerable Bishop capable of inspiring such a glow? The theology of the Trinity, and the counsels of moral perfection contained in many of these pieces are dry subjects for verse. Almost the only one that should be kept is the long poem *On Himself*, in which Gregory

[1] *Sentent l'huile.*

relates his life and trials. Besides its historical interest, there are some piquant traits and happy expressions: it is not a great work of art, but escapes banality. We must, however, add that both Antiquity and the Middle Ages were less severe on these poems than we are to-day. They were much read, copied and often imitated. They mark the starting-point of a rich literature, that includes many valuable works.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa.—The younger brother of Saint Basil and the friend of Saint Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa possessed neither the authority of the one nor the eloquence of the other. Speculation was his particular gift; he was the philosopher and dialectician of the group.

Gregory was born at Cæsarea in or about 335, and was trained by his brother Basil, first in rhetoric and then in asceticism. But the latter drew him from the ascetic life in 371 to make him Bishop of Nyssa and a faithful executor of his wishes: often a clumsy executor, for Gregory was not well fitted for government, and in the very difficult circumstances in which he had to struggle he was sometimes wanting in flexibility and prudence. He was, however, full of good intentions, and for this was deposed by the Arians in 376 and had to suffer for his faith. After two years of exile he returned to his See, and in 381 took part in the Council of Constantinople, of which he was one of the most notable members. From that time his life passed quietly, occupied solely in the composition of his doctrinal works and the publication of some formal discourses. He passed away, somewhere about 394, in as great obscurity as Gregory Nazianzen.

The Bishop of Nyssa's work is valuable as being that of a thinker. He studied philosophy for a long time and he liked clearness and logic; he was captivated by the spirit of systematization and dreamed of nothing less than the reduction to a coherent system of the whole of Christian doctrine. Origen had already undertaken such a task, and Gregory took the Alexandrian master for his model. Such an imitation was not without danger, for not all Origen's ideas were acceptable; not only were obsolete formulas to be found in them, but also erroneous doctrines, and Gregory was too often carried away by his admiration. If his Trinitarian theology is perfectly orthodox and avoids the faults and deficiencies of Origen, his opinions on the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, on the fate of souls after death and on the final restoration of all things borrow doubtful elements from Origenism. And that alone gives to Gregory's teaching an archaic tone, apparent even from the time of its first appearance.

Elsewhere, through his desire to reason and comprehend, Gregory sometimes weakens the mystery of Revelation. From time to time he substitutes for the Scriptural texts and the testimony of tradition, his own personal explanations, new theories on substance, matter and person, which are borrowed ready-made from profane philosophy, and do not always agree very exactly with the Faith defined by the Councils. His style, too, is often heavy and without grace. It is the style of metaphysical treatises, long, entangled with incidents, overloaded with conclusions and complements: the heavy style of the phrase renders the slow movement of the thought very perceptible,

in the problems it has to solve, and the impatient reader gets rather lost in its subtleties, and would greatly prefer something simpler, more flexible and alive.

Such are the defects with which one may reproach the Bishop of Nyssa. Having done this we must recognize in Gregory a keen intellect, with a clear idea of the difficulties, who proposes real problems with precision, furnishing important helps to the solution of many of them. The fine discourses of Gregory Nazianzen and the loyal efforts of Basil might perhaps be insufficient against the dialectics of Eunomius and his followers, or the subtlety of Apollinaris. It needed a philosopher to reply to the philosophers and to show them that orthodoxy had nothing to fear from the dialectician's efforts. Gregory of Nyssa was prepared for this most necessary task by his studies and still more by the power of his own talent. And on this capital point he completed the work of "The Great Cappadocians." Perhaps we are inclined to judge him too severely, because his writings have become old more quickly and are less interesting and easy to read than are those of Basil and Gregory Nazianzen. Nevertheless he has a claim on our gratitude and respect.

The most important portion of Saint Gregory's work is undoubtedly his exposition and defence of Catholic dogma. *The Catechetical Discourse*, in spite of its brevity, occupies the first place. It is an almost complete exposition of Catholic doctrine, a sort of Catechism, in which are recalled and demonstrated, both by Scripture and reason, the principal teaching of the Church on the Trinity, the Incarnation and Redemption, Baptism, the Eucharist

and the Last Things. The author sets out clearly the coherence of religion and the connection of the dogmas. Anyone in the present day who wishes to have an idea of the state of systematic theology at the end of the fourth century, should turn to this remarkable little book, clear, vigorous and decisive.

The great treatise in twelve books, *Against Eunomius* and that *Against Apollinaris* show us the Bishop at grips with the heretics of his time. These two refutations, the most complete of all that we possess, are as important for the historian as for the theologian. The author here freely displays his dialectic skill, and forcibly replies to the captious arguments of his adversaries. Other works of less importance complete these: *To Eustathius on the Trinity; To Ablabius, that there are not three Gods; Against the Greeks, on Common Ideas; To Simplicius, On the Faith;* a *Dialogue on the Soul and the Resurrection; To Hieros, On the Premature Death of Children,* etc. All these great questions are discussed by Gregory in the same spirit, so that the collection of his theological writings constitutes a veritable *Summa* of Christian teaching.

Nor was he satisfied with studying doctrinal questions. As a disciple of Origen, he devoted himself, like his master, to the reading of the Sacred Books, which he interpreted according to Origen's method, in a wholly allegorical sense. His works, *On the Creation of Man;* an *Apology On the Hexœmeron,* or the Work of the Six Days; *On the Life of Moses; On the Titles of the Psalms,* and some others, are rich in moral applications, but too often betray a subtle imagination searching for figurative meanings. At a time when the School of Antioch was imposing upon exegetists, as their

chief duty, the explanation of the literal sense of the Bible, and was persuading Alexandria to adopt the same view, Gregory of Nyssa appears here as a little out of date.

As a disciple of the monks and himself an ascetic, Gregory composed some ascetical works: the most important of these and the only ones that have been much read are *The Life of Saint Macrina*, his own sister, and a treatise, *On Virginity*.

Lastly, obliged by his duty as a bishop to preach often, he published, or allowed to be published, a certain number of sermons on various subjects. These sermons have been rather severely criticized, and we are not inclined, after reading them, to revise the judgment of their critics. They are often long and disconnected; rhetoric is substituted for eloquence, and magniloquence is taken for nobility or elegance. Gregory Nazianzen had already shown himself too apt a disciple of the rhetoricians. Gregory of Nyssa is scarcely anything else; he faithfully employs the rules he had learnt in the schools, and it is only occasionally, in his more familiar discourses, that one comes upon some rare echoes of a soul desirous of pouring itself out.

Amphilochius of Iconium.—Saint Amphilochius is little known in the present day, but during his lifetime he enjoyed almost as great celebrity as his friend, Saint Basil, or Saint Gregory Nazianzen, who was his cousin. He was probably born between 340 and 345, and in 373 we meet him as Bishop of Iconium in Lycaonia, by the favour of Basil; we come across him again in the Councils of 381, 390 and 394, and then we lose sight of him altogether. What we know of him, through the

letters of Basil and Gregory, as well as from his own works, shows him to have been a faithful bishop and a sure and conscientious theologian.

The greater number of his writings are lost. Some letters and homilies, and a portion of a treatise against the Encratites, are all that remain of a fruitful oratorical and literary activity. It is not impossible that some fresh fragments of his works may yet be found, for up to within the last twenty years we only possess some more or less unauthenticated fragments and texts.

Secondary Writers.—By the side of " the Great Cappadocians " there are the names of some authors who must not be completely forgotten.

Eustathius of Sebaste, Basil's master in asceticism, and afterwards his determined enemy, offers the spectacle of a very original personality, very restless and rather quarrelsome. His was a badly-balanced temperament, more occupied in leading an extremely austere life than in holding correct views of doctrine. Even his recent apologists have not succeeded in making him an agreeable character. He wrote a great deal on different subjects, but none of his works are extant.

About the year 400 one of the most famous orators of Asia Minor was Asterius, Bishop of Amasia in Pontus. The homilies that have been preserved under his name explain this reputation. They are beautiful works of rhetoric, carefully studied, flowery, a little lengthy in their eloquence, such, in a word, as would be likely to captivate the cultivated minds of Asia Minor.

From Macarius, who was Bishop of Magnesia, in Caria, in 403, we believe we possess an *Apology*

in five books: the *Monogene*, or *Reply to the Greeks*, of which the only manuscript was lost, almost as soon as it was published. Some critics consider this work as belonging to the first years of the fourth century, but it is probable that it is a hundred years later and can be attributed to Macarius. The *Monogene* is, besides, the work of a distinguished writer, and the replies to the objections drawn from Porphyry are not without value.

Finally, Palladius, Bishop of Helenopolis, in Bithynia, in 400, was a great friend of Saint John Chrysostom, in whose cause he suffered a long exile. He wrote the Life of his friend in the form of a dialogue, a biographical work of great importance, one of the most precious of its kind left us by antiquity. Palladius was also the author of the *Historia Lausiaca*, a collection of the Lives of the Monks, compiled from stories and anecdotes contributed by the monks themselves, and from his personal recollections during his stay in Egypt. This *Historia Lausiaca* at first astounds the reader by the extraordinary narratives it contains; but one is struck by its sincerity, its respect for truth, and by the touching simplicity of its style. It is a document of immense value for the history of the fourth century.

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THIRD PERIOD

THE FIFTH CENTURY

(410-527)

GENERAL SUMMARY

With the death of the great Cappadocians and Saint John Chrysostom begins the last period of patristic literature among the Greeks. It lasted nearly to the advent of Justinian—not that there was then a total break with the past—such a rupture rarely occurs, but that Justinian's reign may be considered as the inauguration of Byzantine history, and after him the life of the Eastern Empire developed steadily till the taking of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453.

The fifth century, succeeding the Golden Age of Saint Athanasius, Saint Basil and Saint Gregory Nazianzen, marks the commencement of an unquestionable decline. It contains some noble characters, vigorous thinkers and theologians of talent; Cyril of Alexandria and Theodoret of Cyrus are among those who are the great honour of the Church. But such men grow more and more rare. The debates raised by Christological problems are unsupported by the genius of a second Athanasius, and their interest is soon exhausted in collections of Scriptural arguments, and compilations of patristic texts. The fifth century is already that of historians, catenists and anthology makers.

On the other hand, the language itself gradually loses its classic purity. This, perhaps, would not

be so great an evil if it had found new life in which to express fresh thoughts, but this was not the case. It became dried up in stereotyped formulas, even when it did not fall into common vulgarisms. Henceforth one has to choose between the artificial style of the rhetoricians and writers who content themselves with an approximate correction. At the most it is only occasionally that true feeling draws from the orators some noble words that recall the far-off days when Christian literature was but the expression of the writer's soul.

From 381 the Patriarchate of Constantinople acquires increasing importance. Antioch and Alexandria remain the two poles of Christian thought; the rivalry of these cities grows more acute, and the traditional opposition of their schools, their theologians and exegetists is the determining cause of currents of thought that must be studied separately. But to Asia Minor, henceforth enclosed and shrunken within herself, succeeds the new Rome, Constantinople, as the centre of literary and intellectual activity. It is there that the theologians go to receive their watchwords, that the celebrated preachers of error make themselves heard, and historians seek to publish their works. The fifth century sees the birth and growth of this centralization, the full effect of which is to be found in the sixth century.

CHAPTER VIII

ALEXANDRIA AND EGYPT

Saint Cyril. The Monks. Synesius of Cyrene. Ammonius and Eusebius of Alexandria.

The first successors of Saint Athanasius in the See of Alexandria have no very considerable place in the history of Christian literature, nor even in the general history of the Church, which has nothing special to relate of Peter II (373-381), or of Timotheus (381-385). Theophilus, on the contrary (385-412), by the energy of his character and the extent of his ambition, filled a considerable rôle at the end of the fourth century. He made use of Origenism as a weapon with which to sacrifice all those who thwarted him, and he was clever enough to find auxiliaries in his revengeful projects who were worthy of a better cause. Saint Jerome assisted him against Rufinus and John of Jerusalem, and Saint Epiphanius against Saint John Chrysostom. Naturally, this antipathetic personage wrote a great deal, especially letters and discourses, which were violent, shrewd and artful. We have only fragments of these writings, still insufficiently edited, and a few letters translated by Saint Jerome.

Saint Cyril.—On the death of Theophilus his nephew Cyril was elected to succeed him in the See

of Saint Mark (17th October, 412). He had already for some time been occupied with ecclesiastical business under his uncle, whose prejudices and rancour he was too much inclined to share. He had, in the company of Theophilus, assisted, in 403, at the " Synod of the Oak " which deposed Saint John Chrysostom. His election at first met with great opposition, and the massacres and riots which marked the beginning of his episcopate, the expulsion of the Jews, the murder of Hypatia, etc., did not help towards conciliation.

Nevertheless he governed the Church of Alexandria for nearly seventeen years, without, as far as we know, having done anything remarkable, when he heard of the sermons of Nestorius, the new Patriarch of Constantinople. Cyril immediately discovered their subtle venom and became the champion of orthodoxy. His intervention at Constantinople and then in Rome, with Pope Celestine, belong to history. The Council of Ephesus, at which he presided, in 431, marks the apogee of his career. We know how the assembly condemned Nestorius and approved the formula of the traditional doctrine drawn up by the Bishop of Alexandria. But Saint Cyril's triumph was too striking not to have caused some wounds. After having unmasked the heresy of Nestorius he had to apply himself to heal the schism caused by the insufficiently careful formulas of Eastern terminology. John of Antioch and his friends separated from Cyril; he strove to reconcile them by generous concessions which ended in the Act of Union of 433. After this Act was signed it was necessary to get it accepted, both by his own fanatical partisans and his adversaries in high positions. The last

years of the Patriarch were consumed in this arduous task. He died on the 27th June, 444, leaving behind him, in spite of all his efforts towards peace, the Church in deep trouble and ready to accept a new heresy.

It is very difficult to judge fairly of Cyril's personality or his works. He is involved in too many passionate struggles. He inherited from his uncle a domineering spirit, great ambition and a desire of conquest. But he possessed a far truer sense of Catholic tradition and zeal for truth, and, we may also add, a love of peace and unity. We cannot say that Cyril's character is unreservedly impressive; even from the first his conduct was much disputed. Even to-day certain incidents in his career, his attitude at the Council of Ephesus, his haste in opening the discussion without waiting for the arrival of the Eastern Bishops, may disturb our appreciation. But the purity of his faith is unquestioned, and it should be added that his last years were beyond all criticism. There is an indescribable grandeur in his unceasing efforts to bring about an almost impossible reconciliation between Alexandria and the East.

The Nestorian controversies naturally divide Saint Cyril's literary and theological activity into two periods. Before the year 429 the Patriarch commented on the Holy Scriptures, refuted Arianism and explained the Trinitarian doctrine. But after that year he is entirely taken up with the defence of orthodoxy, and nearly all his works are composed in refutation of the new heretics.

To the first part of his career belong the seventeen books, *Of Adoration in Spirit and in Truth*, and the thirteen books of the *Glaphyra*, both of which lay

down the principles of the spiritual interpretation of the Old Testament; then, the allegorical Commentaries on Isaias, the Minor Prophets, Saint John and others, a considerable exegetical work, where moral questions predominate, and the traditional rules of the Alexandrian School are followed. The Bishop also wrote before 429 the *Treasure, On the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity*, as well as seven dialogues on the same subject, in which is shown, according to the Scriptures and tradition of the Fathers, the dogma, as it stood at the end of the great Arian controversies.

Then came suddenly the Nestorian question, and Cyril abandoned his peaceful works and threw himself into the fray. To great books of careful study succeeded brochures, pamphlets, tracts, earnest, animated, fiery: *Five Books of Contradictions against the Discourse of Nestorius; On the True Faith*, to the Emperor Theodosius II, and to the Empresses Arcadia, Macrina, Pulcheria and Eudoxia; an *Apologetic* in defence of the Twelve Chapters or Propositions, sometimes called the *Anathematisms*, against the Eastern Bishops; a *Letter to Euoptius, Against the Attack of the Twelve Propositions by Theodoret;* another *Explanation of the Propositions drawn up at Ephesus;* and *An Apology to the Emperor*. All these date from 430 and 431, and the titles are sufficient to manifest Cyril's overflowing activity during those decisive months. To these must be added letters and sermons, particularly six homilies preached at Ephesus, and perhaps others. The Patriarch faced every attack and spent himself without reserve in the exposition of the true doctrine of the Church, which was also his own.

There are, in fact, very few works of Saint Cyril posterior to 433. There are some letters that are of much value as history, in which we can follow the great Bishop's efforts for union and peace. Also an important Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John and an apologetic treatise *Against Julian*, where the author refutes one after the other the Apostate's attacks.

After his return to Alexandria it would seem that Saint Cyril needed rest and recollection, and his writings then served to distract him from the anxieties of the Nestorian controversy.

This is not the place to write an appreciation of Saint Cyril as a Theologian. He is undoubtedly among the greatest. He exercised a decisive influence on the development of Christology. The formulas he discovered, and the proofs he brought forward have been many times officially adopted by the Church, who placed her seal on so many marks of veneration when Leo XIII accorded to the Saint the title of " Doctor of the Church."

As a writer, however, the Patriarch of Alexandria may certainly be criticized. He composes badly and speaks no better; his developments are long and confused; his language is often commonplace, wanting in elegance and sometimes in clarity. But we must not make him responsible for defects which belonged to his time, though it must be acknowledged that he did not try to avoid them. He was so completely occupied with his ideas that he attached no importance to their material expression, even though such indifference might injure the clarity of the ideas themselves.

The successors of Cyril are far from being of like importance. Obstinate Monophysites, they devote

themselves to combating Nestorianism, and under this name they include the teaching of Pope Saint Leo and the Council of Chalcedon. After Dioscurus (444-451), the best known is Timothy Ælurus, called "the Cat" (457-477), a violent and indomitable character, who died in exile, after having composed a long *Refutation of the Council of Chalcedon*, of which we possess an Armenian translation.

The Monks.—In the course of the fourth century the monks of Egypt had become a real power, with whom it was necessary to reckon. Their arguments were for the most part purely drastic and had nothing in common with literature; but they also wrote, and in the fifth century some among them made a name in literary history.

Schenout or Schenoudi of Atrib was an illustrious monk in the fifth century, who governed 2,200 religious men and 1,800 nuns; he accompanied Saint Cyril to Ephesus, and died in 466 at the age of one hundred and eighteen. He wrote a great deal, chiefly letters and sermons in a picturesque and popular style; but he wrote in Coptic, for he did not know Greek.

Pandoros and Annianos are only known to us through George Syncelius, a Byzantine historian of the ninth century. According to him these two persons were Egyptian monks who, in the twenty-second year of Theophilus' episcopate (407-408), wrote many very useful historical chapters. They were probably chronicles, like those of Eusebius, and one is not a little surprised to find historians amongst the monks.

The details of the life of Isidore of Pelusium are almost unknown. He was born in Alexandria about

360, and for forty years was superior of a monastery in the neighbourhood of Pelusium. He died about 435. Nothing could be simpler or more tranquil than such a life, but it was no less active. From his monastery the monk wrote to all persons who were illustrious or influential in the Christian world, and his letters were always received with respect and carefully preserved. We possess no less than 2,012, divided into five books and dealing with very various subjects, though most of them relate to questions of exegesis or asceticism. These letters show us Isidore as a broad-minded man, of classical culture and knowledge, and an allegorical interpreter of Scripture, in which he seeks unexpected and sometimes very subtle lessons. His correspondence is precious, for the knowledge it imparts of men and events during the fifth century.

To the monk Isaac, one of the religious celebrities of Monophysitism, we owe a certain number of ascetic discourses and letters, of which the Greek text has not yet been published, and which are not without interest. Isaac died in 488.

Finally, under the title of *Apophthegmata Patrum*, there is a collection of sentences and narratives attributed to the most illustrious monks of the fourth and fifth centuries. This artificial compilation, where the monks' names are placed in alphabetical order, from the Abbot Anthony to the Abbot Or, had an immense success, both in the East and West, during antiquity. There have been many editions and translations, introducing many variations, new stories and counsels, that have resulted in a whole literature which has not yet been sufficiently disentangled. The original work must have been composed in Egypt, at the end of the fourth or

beginning of the fifth century. Even to-day it can be read with pleasure, for it presents a truthful picture of the people's admiration for the great virtue of the monks.

Synesius of Cyrene.—Very different from the monks whom we remember through their *Apophthegmata* is Synesius, Bishop of Ptolemais. He belonged to an ancient family of Cyrene, and was born and educated in paganism. After his conversion he continued to live an easy life; the chase and literature sufficed to fill his peaceful days. But in 405 the Moors invaded Pentapolis and attacked the town of Cyrene. Synesius felt that *noblesse oblige*, and he left his books to put himself at the head of his fellow-citizens; he raised their courage and succeeded in driving away the barbarians. A second invasion, in 406, was repulsed in the same way, and then Synesius, like a true sage, returned to his solitude. But not for long, for about 410 the people of Ptolemais chose for their Bishop the courageous man who had so well defended Pentapolis. Synesius seems to have been surprised at nothing. He accepted the unexpected task and devoted himself to his new duties, which included a generous disbursement of his riches for the help of those who had suffered from the invasion. He also strove to study theology. His episcopate was troubled by barbarian invasions, but he shows himself in everything to be worthy of his high mission. We know nothing of the circumstances of his death; he disappears from history towards the year 414.

As a faithful disciple of the rhetoricians and a lover of eloquence and poetry, Synesius wrote a great deal in an elegant style, and his works are no

less surprising than his life. What, for example, are we to think of a treatise *On Dreams*, or of *A Praise of Baldness*, which are among his first works? Nine or ten hymns, in the Dorian dialect and in the classic form of verse, and two discourses on Revolutions, which relate to the barbarian invasions, are not much more Christian in tone. There are, however, one hundred and fifty letters which reveal the interior life of this thoroughly good man, who was made a bishop in such an unforeseen way: they certainly contain the most interesting and living portion of his literary legacy.

Ammonius and Eusebius of Alexandria.—In order to give a less incomplete idea of the literary activity of the Christians of Egypt during the fifth century, we may cite the names of Ammonius and Eusebius.

They are both merely names to us. A letter from the bishops and clergy of Egypt, addressed in 457 to the Emperor Leo I, contains the name of a certain Ammonius, priest and procurator of Alexandria. It is now supposed that to him is to be attributed many exegetical fragments, preserved in the *Catenæ* under the single word, Ammonius. These fragments belong to Commentaries on the Psalms, Daniel, Saint Matthew, Saint John, the Acts of the Apostles and the First Epistle of Saint Peter. They reveal a wise and prudent commentator, anxious above everything to maintain the arguments from Scripture in favour of orthodoxy.

It is possible that Eusebius of Alexandria may have been a fictitious person. An unknown writer, probably belonging to the second half of the fifth century, published under the name of Eusebius, a

collection of twenty-two so-called homilies, with an introduction professing to relate the author's life. According to this story Eusebius succeeded Cyril in the See of Alexandria; he converted a certain sinner named Alexander who, in his turn, became bishop after Eusebius' death. But this account is purely legendary. Nevertheless, the homilies still exist, and they are interesting, as showing us certain little-studied aspects of the Christian life of the time, the most curious of which relate to the observance of Sunday and astrology. They were much read by antiquity, and the text was modified at different times, so that we now possess several different recensions of at least some of them. They seem to have been first published in Egypt, perhaps at Alexandria; but there is nothing very exact to be said about them.

CHAPTER IX

THE PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Nestorius. The Adversaries of Nestorius. The Successors of Nestorius. Historians: Philostorgius, Philip of Side, Socrates, Sozomen, Gelasius of Cyzicus. Ascetic Writers. Poets.

The fifth century sees the authority of the Church of Constantinople definitively established. Theologians, historians, ascetic writers, orators all crowd to the capital which will make their reputation, and even those who remain in the provinces are under the influence of the Imperial City.

Nestorius.—The first amongst the Patriarchs of this epoch who must find a place in literary history is Saint Cyril's great adversary, the heresiarch, Nestorius.

He was born, about 380, at Germanicia, in Syria-Euphoratensis, but Antioch, where he had long studied, became his spiritual home. He made his monastic profession in the monastery of Euprepius, near the city, and there acquired by his preaching, a great reputation for eloquence; he was, in consequence, chosen, at the beginning of 428, to succeed Sisinnius as Patriarch of Constantinople.

The inhabitants of the capital at first welcomed

their new Bishop as another Chrysostom, but they soon discovered their mistake. Nestorius, who had promised in his first sermon to combat all heresies, soon began to scandalize his hearers by strange assertions about the Blessed Virgin. There was excitement over his sermons; placards were posted on the doors of the cathedral, and before long the world heard of the Patriarch's temerity. Saint Cyril of Alexandria intervened at once, and strove to recall Nestorius to the true Faith. But the latter continued his teaching, though not for long, for he was condemned in 430 by Pope Celestine and solemnly deposed by the Council of Ephesus in 431. He was then obliged to submit and retired to his former monastery at Euprepius. In 435, however, an imperial edict drove him thence and exiled him to the Oasis in Egypt; here he ended his melancholy existence in or about 451.

The greater number of Nestorius' writings in their original tongue have disappeared, in consequence of the imperial decree of 435, ordering them to be burnt. But there remain Latin translations of several homilies and some letters; certain homilies have also been preserved in Greek under borrowed names, particularly that of Saint John Chrysostom, and scholars have not given up hope of still enriching their collection of Nestoriana.

These hopes have been freshly kindled by the discovery in 1910 of the Syriac text of the *Liber Heraclidis*. This important work is a justification of Nestorius, composed at the time of the Council of Chalcedon, and intended to prove the injustice of the condemnation at Ephesus. Its first editors have unreservedly admitted its authenticity; perhaps their judgment has been precipitate. In any case

the historical and theological interest of the book is considerable, and its discovery makes the loss of Nestorius' two works, the *Theopaschite* and the *Tragedy*, less to be regretted.

Nestorius had not many disciples in his Patriarchate. The only one that need be mentioned here is Eutherius, Bishop of Tyana in Cappadocia, who was deposed, exiled to Scythopolis, and died at Tyre in 435, after having refused to sign the Act of Union. We have some of his letters, and in particular the *Refutations of Certain Propositions*, which have come down to us under cover of the names of Saint Athanasius and Theodoret. This last work, full of power and passion, is a convinced defence of Nestorianism.

The Adversaries of Nestorius.—These were numerous. One of the first and most ardent was the rhetorician Eusebius, afterwards Bishop of Dorylæum, a man of narrow and violent character, but a passionate defender of orthodoxy, who, having denounced Nestorius as the successor of Paul of Samosata, attacked Eutyches, in whose teaching he discovered the Monophysite heresy. Amongst the members of the Council of Ephesus may be mentioned Firmus of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, an elegant writer of insignificant letters; Theodotus of Ancyra, who wrote a (lost) refutation of Nestorius, a Commentary on the Symbol of Nicæa and some homilies in which we find the expression of a tender piety towards the Mother of God; Eusebius of Heraclea and Severus of Synnada, from whom we have some homilies in an Ethiopian translation. There are many others, needless to mention, who wrote letters and discourses.

The Successors of Nestorius.—After the condemnation of the heresiarch Maximian replaced him in the See of Constantinople, but he was succeeded by Proclus, who, in 426, had been consecrated Archbishop of Cyzicus. His diocesans had refused to accept him, and he remained in Constantinople, where his preaching was very popular with the faithful. As Patriarch he continued to preach and strove with praiseworthy zeal to establish peace in his Church. He died in 446.

We can judge of his great eloquence by twenty-five sermons on various subjects; several of these are consecrated to the praise of the Blessed Virgin. He gives the impression of a lively intelligence, fond of research and a faithful disciple of the rhetoricians, one whose chief talent consists in applying the lessons of his masters to his work in the pulpit. This was the popular style of the period, and the success of his sermons is not surprising.

Flavian and Anatolius, his successors, have left nothing of importance to literature but some letters, but Gennadius (458-471), an exegetist and preacher, deserves mention, though we have only fragments of his works. He wrote a complete Commentary on Daniel, perhaps also an explanation of the Epistles of Saint Paul, numerous homilies, and some doctrinal works, amongst them a refutation of the twelve Anathematisms of Saint Cyril, and a writing addressed to a certain Parthenius. Those who have read them praise the elegance and vigour of his style.

Historians.—History, hitherto so poorly represented, takes a brilliant position in the fifth century, and her most successful writers belong to Constantinople.

The first in date of the great historians of this period is Philostorgius, an Arian and a faithful disciple of Anomæanism. He was born about 368 at Borissus in the Second Cappadocia; he went to Constantinople at the age of twenty, and there passed most of his life, interrupted only by journeys for information or from piety. Between 425 and 433 he composed as a continuation of Eusebius, an *Ecclesiastical History* in twelve books, covering the hundred years since the Council of Nicæa. This extraordinary *History* is a piece of special pleading in favour of Anomæanism. All through this narrative Philostorgius strives to show forth the glories of his little Church, the martyrs and saints to whom she has given birth, the persecutions she has endured and her temporary triumphs. With pious affection the historian presents the picture of his Eunomæan community as the one who alone possesses absolute truth, placing it between paganism and Catholicism, both of which he detests. Miseries and ruin do not terrify this Church; her confidence remains unshaken in the midst of the worst disillusions, even though she may have to wait to triumph till the Day of Judgment. The sources and testimonies used by Philostorgius are naturally those of his own Church. The voices of all the witnesses are the voices of Arians.

This work is only known to us in fragments. Photius made many important extracts, which form the basis of all our editions. To these, by means of patient research, may be added other portions quoted here and there, which enable us to gain an exact idea of this *History* and gather much valuable information from it. Few books enlighten us on the fifth century as does this thrilling apology for a

vanquished party that has almost entirely disappeared, but which loudly proclaims its faith in an approaching triumph, resting on more or less carefully interpreted experiences of the past.

Much less impassioned is Philip Sidetes, or of Side in Pamphylia. He was a Catholic, and after attending the lessons of the Alexandrian Rhodon he went to Constantinople and became a priest. He lived in the ecclesiastical society of the capital, and was a perpetual candidate for the Patriarchal Chair, which escaped him on three different occasions. He consoled himself for his disappointed ambition by writing an immense *Ecclesiastical History*.

This must have been a gigantic work, for it began with the creation of the world and finished with the author's own time. It included thirty-six books, each of which took up several volumes, and touched on almost every subject: geometry, astronomy, arithmetic, music, geography were all mixed up with history. All this except a few fragments has disappeared, crushed by its own weight.

The *Ecclesiastical History* of Socrates has on the contrary been preserved in its integrity. It is true that Socrates the Scholastic was a modest man. He was born and lived in Constantinople and has spoken so little of himself that we know nothing of his life. The composition of his *History* was probably its most striking event. It is in seven books and relates the different events in the life of the Church from 305 to 439. He must have given his whole care to this task, for he brought out two successive editions, and informs us himself that in the second he made use of sources and documents that were unknown when he was preparing his first edition.

Socrates was indifferent to fine language and did not pretend to write a work of art. His style is exactly correct; it offers no particular attraction to the reader. But the *History* is a most conscientious work. Besides the books of Eusebius, Rufinus and Saint Athanasius, he utilizes the Collection of Councils by Sabinus of Heraclea and the Chronicle of Constantinople, also many oral testimonies, particularly those of the Novatian priest Auxanon. The author has clearly spared no effort to draw as exact and complete a picture as possible. On the whole he has succeeded very well; he has written with a rare impartiality of the most disputed characters; what he says of the Novatians, of whom he must have known a great deal, or again, of the Nestorians, is particularly remarkable. His work is not free from errors, and his documentation is sometimes insufficient. Nevertheless, the *Ecclesiastical History* of Socrates is one of the most interesting books produced by Christian erudition.

Very inferior is the *Ecclesiastical History* of Salaminius Hermias Sozomen, the contemporary and imitator of Socrates. Born in the neighbourhood of Gaza, he was living as a lawyer in Constantinople when he conceived the idea of writing a *History of the Church*. The two first books which are lost, must have been an epitome of Eusebius, relating the events from the Ascension to the death of Licinius. The strictly original work begins here and is continued in nine books down to 439; but the text which we possess stops at the year 423, why, we do not know.

One cannot help being struck by the resemblance between the two works of Socrates and Sozomen. The latter is, in fact, a plagiarist of the first.

Although Sozomen never mentions Socrates he follows him throughout in the fashion of a copyist; he imitates the plan but contradicts his conclusions. Still, he is not wanting either in talent or in the historical sense. He must have gone to different sources from those of his predecessor or used them more thoroughly; in many cases he refers to his own recollections and to information received from reliable witnesses. He writes well and elegantly and in this is superior to Socrates. His *History* has an unequivocal literary pretension; what he fails in is honesty.

Gelasius of Cyzicus is posterior to Sozomen by some years, for his *Ecclesiastical History* was written after 475, but we know nothing of his life. This *History* is devoted to the reign of Constantine and is divided into three books, but we only possess the two first and some portions of the third. It lays particular stress on the Council of Nicæa, which the author says he relates from a very old parchment book given to his father by Dalmatius, Bishop of Cyzicus. In point of fact, this old book does not seem ever to have existed, and the only really authentic documents used by Gelasius are the Histories of Eusebius, Rufinus, Socrates and Theodoret. The efforts that have been lately made to rehabilitate Gelasius do not appear destined to be very successful.

The three great historical works of Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret (who will be mentioned later), contain many repetitions, as they describe the same periods and the two last writers drew their inspiration from the first. During the reign of Justin I (518-527), it was found advisable to make a compilation of the three under the title of a

Tripartite History. This work was accomplished by a Reader of Santa Sophia, named Theodore. This writer also composed a continuation of the Tripartite, a *History* that began with the preliminaries of the Council of Ephesus and was carried to the reign of Justin I. This work is lost, or, more exactly, we only have some extracts collected by Nicephorus Callistus in the fourteenth century.

Basil of Cilicia was nearly the contemporary of Theodore. He also wrote an *Ecclesiastical History* in three books, containing the period between 450 and 527. Photius, who had seen this book, declares that it was crammed with documents and justificatory passages. Nothing remains of it to-day.

Ascetic Writers.—Ascetic literature is represented in the fifth century by writers of importance.

One of the strangest of these is Saint Nilus. His life is very legendary. Until the present day he was supposed to be a great noble, a disciple of Saint John Chrysostom, a Prætorian Prefect in Constantinople, who, about the year 300, generously resigned all his posts and fortune to retire with his son Theodulos to the solitude of Mount Sinai, whilst his wife and daughter led a monastic life in Egypt. It appears now that all this is fiction and the reality is much simpler. We first meet Nilus in history at the end of the fourth century, as the superior of a monastic community at Ancyra in Galatia. He does not seem ever to have left his monastery, and we can follow him, down to about 431, through his correspondence, which then comes to an end.

Like his contemporary, Isidore of Pelusium, Nilus is a great letter-writer. We possess more than a thousand letters on different subjects: exegesis,

dogmatic theology and, above all, asceticism. The letters are not those of a stylist, and Nilus has not the rich classic culture of Isidore; the authors whom he quotes and from whom he sometimes copies at length, are exclusively Christian; the most frequent being Saint John Chrysostom. But we find in them much good sense, appreciation of the interior life, and wise counsels of perfection.

These counsels are elsewhere developed in numerous works: *To Eulogius the Monk; On Prayer; On the Eight Spirits of Wickedness; Of the Superiority of Monks; Of Voluntary Poverty;* and many more, some of which are addressed to Christians in general, others particularly to monks.

Antiquity has attributed many ascetic writings to Nilus of which he is not the true author. The most famous is the Christian Paraphrase in the *Manuale* of Epictetus, which found many readers for centuries and whose author is still unknown.

Mark the Hermit, the contemporary of Nilus, was for long the Abbot of a monastery at or near Ancyra in Galatia. But towards the end of his life he retired into solitude, either in the desert of Judea, or of Scete, in Egypt. The date of his death is unknown, but it was certainly after the beginning of the Nestorian controversy.

Photius speaks of nine works by Mark which have been preserved: *On the Spiritual Law; Of those who believe in Justification by Works; On Penance; On Fasting; To Nicholas, Salutary Precepts for the Soul; Reply to those who doubt the Divine Baptism; Conversation of the Mind with the Soul; A Dispute with a Scholastic; On Melchisedech.* With the exception of the last, all these contain moral teaching. Mark shows himself as a wise director of

consciences and by no means the audacious reformer that some historians have thought him.

Unlike Nilus and Mark, Diodochus was not a solitary, but a Bishop of Photike, in Epirus, who lived in the middle of the fifth century. We owe to him *One Hundred Gnostic Propositions*, which form an interesting initiation into mystical contemplation.

Poets.—That no literary glory may be wanting to the Church of Constantinople, we must add that during the fifth century she gave birth to one or two poets; mediocre and poor enough in quality, of whom it would not be worth while to speak had they not tried to create a new rhythm.

The Empress Eudocia, daughter of an Athenian Sophist, became the wife of Theodosius II by a curious accident. She created nothing, but contented herself with writing verses on the classic models, an epic poem on her husband's campaigns, a translation in hexameters of the Octateuch, Zacharias and Daniel, and a poem in three books on Saint Cyprian the martyr. She also ventured on a Life of Christ in Homeric hexameters. This *Homerocenton* is a masterpiece of skill and bad taste. One wonders how a woman, otherwise intelligent and cultivated, could have taken up such a fantastical idea as that of using Homer's verse to translate the Gospel. The poem on Saint Cyprian is a versified transcription of an ancient text. Eudocia's contemporaries admired her works, but later they fell into the oblivion from which they ought never to have emerged.

More important, because more promising are the attempts at a new style of poetry, based, not on the quantity of the syllables, but on the tonic accent.

Two pieces of Saint Gregory Nazianzen, an *Evening Hymn,* and a *Hymn to Virgins* are perhaps the most ancient specimens of this new rhythm.

Theodore the Reader tells us of two composers of tropes, Anthimus and Timocles, one a declared Chalcedonian, the other a partisan of Monophysitism; they were both priests in Constantinople about 450-460. The loss of their poetic compositions is much to be regretted.

Auxentius, who lived at the same time and had a hermitage on Mount Scopas, near Constantinople, is rather better known to us, for there is a trope preserved in his biography; a composition in rhythmic prose and dialogue, which may have been used in the liturgy.

We may also possess other hymns of the fifth century among the innumerable specimens of sacred music in the books of Oriental Chant, but it is impossible to distinguish them, as they are anonymous. And indeed it was not till later, under the reign of Anastasius, that the greatest hymnographer of the Greek Christian Church, Romanos the Melodius, began to write.

CHAPTER X

ANTIOCH AND JERUSALEM

Theodoret. Theodoret's Friends. Severus of Antioch. Exegetists. Theologians and Orators. Hagiographers. The Pseudo-Areopagite.

In the Patriarchate of Antioch one name dominates all the literary history of the fifth century, that of Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus, around whom are ranged many theologians who support him in his combat with Saint Cyril and the theology of the Alexandrian School.

Theodoret.—In spite of regrettable errors the Bishop of Cyrus is one of the noblest figures in the history of the ancient Church. He had the soul of an apostle, devoured with ardent zeal, a changeless fidelity to his friends, for whom he suffered persecution; a remarkable intelligence which grasped all the great questions of theology, exegesis and apologetics. He spent his life in the service of the Christian Faith. Yet, with all this, he was suspected by many of his brethren, who accused him of heresy because he could not make up his mind to abandon the person of Nestorius, all whose opinions he did not, however, share. He was under the perpetual obligation of justifying himself with more or less

success. In 449 he wrote to Pope Saint Leo: "I sigh under the misfortunes of the Church and desire only to be silent. For twenty-five years I have governed the Church confided to me, without incurring the reproach of the Bishops of Antioch; I have converted more than a thousand souls from the errors of Marcionism and Arianism; I have purged my diocese of every vestige of heresy. God knows that I have been stoned by the hands of the heretics, and what combats I have fought against them, against the pagans and the Jews. And after so many labours and pains I am condemned without a hearing." He will be condemned till after his death, and the Council of 553 will anathematize some of his works.

Theodoret was born at Antioch towards 393, and studied there. He studied deeply, assimilating the sweets of classic culture as well as theology and Christian exegesis. He was living in a monastery near Antioch when, in 423, he was raised to the episcopate and became Bishop of Cyrus in Syria. It was a poor diocese of eight hundred villages in a mountainous region, with an uneducated population, many of whom were Jews and heretics of all sorts; they spoke only Syriac. But Theodoret was a courageous man, and set himself with ardour to effect the conversion of his flock by preaching and instruction in Christian doctrine. For seven years he led this praiseworthy life of a missionary bishop. Then the storm of Nestorianism broke out.

It was a terrible trial for Theodoret. His whole theological training had prejudiced him against the doctrine of Saint Cyril. When the latter published his twelve anathematisms and presented them as the expression of the orthodox Faith, Theodoret

opposed them without mercy. He was, besides, personally attached to Nestorius, and he would not be persuaded to subscribe to the deposition of the Patriarch. In 433 he had himself drawn up the formula of agreement between Egypt and the East, and when he found that this was not considered sufficient, and he must accept the condemnation of Nestorius, he refused to sign. It was only in 435 that his signature was obtained, but without an anathema.

The death of Saint Cyril, in 444, did not put an end to Theodoret's troubles, for the new Patriarch of Alexandria, Dioscurus, taught a very different theory from Saint Cyril's, and one that was wholly erroneous, and he began by gaining victory after victory. In 449 the "Robber Council" of Ephesus seemed to secure the triumph of Eutychianism. Theodoret was solemnly deposed and exiled to his former monastery as to a prison. But in 450 there was a change. The Bishop of Cyrus, who had appealed to Pope Saint Leo, was convoked to the Council of Chalcedon; he was received there in the following year and reinstated in his See. But he had to condemn Nestorius, which he did, this time without reserve. Then he returned to Cyrus and spent his last years there in peace. He died about 460.

Few careers have been so troubled, and, by a strange contradiction, Theodoret detested strife. His pious and timid character disposed him towards a quiet life spent in the pastoral cares of a good country bishop, who, having fulfilled his duties, might devote himself to the writing of learned works. But Providence decided otherwise, and Theodoret had to fight. He fought, as such men do, earnestly and unskilfully. He pushed too far

a useless and dangerous fidelity to Nestorius and a passionate hostility to Saint Cyril; he thus failed to preserve the means that would have enabled him to hold the place to which his eminent qualities entitled him.

As a writer Theodoret did not neglect any of the sacred sciences. His theological works were mostly composed during the periods of strife, as may be perceived by their combative tone. But when peace was restored the Bishop took pleasure in writing Bible commentaries, books of history, apologies for religion, all leisurely in tone, showing us the learned author in full possession of his materials.

The following are the polemical works: *A Refutation of the Twelve Anathematisms; Against Cyril and the Council of Ephesus; Of the Holy and Life-giving Trinity; Of the Incarnation of the Lord; For Diodorus and Theodore; Against the Arians and Eunomians; Against the Macedonians; Against the Apollinarists; Against the Marcionites;* and the most important of all, the *Eranistes*, or *Polymorphos*, a dialogue in four books between an orthodox and a beggar, who is the spokesman of the Monophysites. All these titles smell of powder. If Theodoret combats the older heresies, it is for the sake of his flock, among whom there are still Marcionites and Eunomians, but he reserves his fire for the teaching of Saint Cyril, and still more for the conclusions that some of the Saint's partisans claimed to draw from it. In the *Eranistes* all tradition is invoked in favour of Theodoret; the rich anthologies which complete the fourth book have had their predecessors, but they serve no less as models for a rich literature.

The apologetic works are chiefly directed against

the Jews and pagans. Of a treatise against the former we have only a fragment. But we possess in their entirety ten remarkable *Discourses on Divine Providence*, which appear to have been preached at Antioch before 431, and, above all, the twelve books of *Remedies for the Diseases of the Greeks*, a vast compilation, where the utilization of former Apologies is evident, especially those of Clement and Eusebius, but which also manifests an immense amount of personal study of profane writers. By the purity and elegance of its style, imitated from Plato, this work recalls the great periods of classic literature.

The exegesis of Theodoret aims particularly at the literal sense, as was to be expected in an Antiochene. In the beginning he worked by detailed commentaries. As a bishop untroubled by theological discussions, he had time to give complete explanations of the Canticle of Canticles, the Psalms, the Major and Minor Prophets and the Epistles of Saint Paul. Later, he contented himself with answering questions on the more difficult passages; thus we have the questions on the *Octateuch*, the *Four Books of Kings* and *Two Books of Paralipomenon*, which belong to the last years of his life.

About the same time that he was working at these Theodoret studied history, and as a help to forget his present troubles, he took pleasure in recalling the religious glories of the past. In his *Religious History* he describes the lives of the great ascetics of the East, less celebrated, perhaps, but no less holy than those of the West. Amongst others he relates the extraordinary life of Simeon Stylites, whom he may himself have seen on his column. He naturally describes chiefly the solitaries of his

own diocese, and this popular, picturesque and wonderful book delighted the people of the savage country of Cyrus. The *Ecclesiastical History*, composed during his exile, in 449-450, is of larger design. It is intended to manifest the triumph of orthodoxy over heresy by recalling the events of the hundred years between 323 and 428. Apparently out of prudence Theodoret concludes his work before the beginnings of Nestorianism; but his present difficulties could not have been absent from his thoughts when describing the combats of the great bishops of the fourth century. Finally, the *Compendium of the Fables of the Heretics* completes the Apology sketched in the History. With the aid of the most ancient authors the Bishop recalls all the old errors with their strange and forgotten names, and contrasts with these dead fables the wonderful vitality of the Church, who finds in her very victories an invincible argument of her divinity.

Such was Theodoret's literary work, to which must be added sermons and letters. There are not many of the first remaining, but his correspondence —about two hundred and thirty letters—is admirable. They are valuable, not only for their style, which is that of a cultured writer, but still more for their simplicity and *abandon*, and the confidences into which they admit us. They show us Theodoret's soul; and it is a great soul, in spite of its inevitable weakness, and even the errors that no one can dream of excusing.

Theodoret's Friends.—In his strife with Saint Cyril Theodoret was not left alone. He had with him the majority of the Eastern bishops, or at least of the most eminent in wisdom and knowledge.

But it is unnecessary to mention them, as what is left of their literature is mostly insignificant. Some letters and fragments of sermons collected in conciliary papers, or in historical works, are all that remain of the writings of John of Antioch, Andrew of Samosata, Alexander of Hierapolis, Helladius of Tarsus, and many others, whose names cross the long history of the Nestorian controversy, and who thought to serve the orthodox Faith by fighting against the Patriarch of Alexandria.

The only one worthy of special mention is Irenæus of Tyre, first an imperial functionary and a devoted friend of Nestorius, exiled about 435 to Arabia Petræa, ten years later made Bishop of Tyre, deposed in 448, condemned in 449 by the "Robber Council" of Ephesus, dead in 450. He wrote a great justificatory work in defence of Nestorius and himself, which he called *The Tragedy*. This book was filled with documents, letters and Acts of Councils destined—so he hoped—to prove the orthodoxy of his friend. This *Tragedy* was considered extremely valuable by historians, not so much for its style as from the unique collection of original texts. It is no longer extant, but there is a Latin refutation of very great interest; the author of the *Synodicon against the Tragedy of Irenæus*, no doubt a deacon of the sixth century, has taken the texts cited by Irenæus and endeavoured to prove by ingenious arguments that these texts condemned Nestorius, and were in Cyril's favour. The reasoning is not very solid, but it enables us to read in a faithful translation many documents relating to the Council of Ephesus.

Severus of Antioch.—It was not long before

Nestorianism was relegated to the countries of the Syrian tongue, and its writers do not belong to our subject. Monophysitism, on the contrary, was for long powerful in the Empire, and provoked inexhaustible controversies amongst the Greek theologians. Its most devoted apologist on the confines of the fifth and sixth centuries was the Patriarch Severus of Antioch. A great fighter, his life was a continual succession of battles, and he died without avowing himself vanquished. He was born at Sozopolis, in Pisidia, of pagan parents, and after his education at Alexandria and Berytus embraced a monastic career at Maïuma, near Gaza. In 512 the Monophysites made him Patriarch of Antioch, but he did not remain there long. In 518 he was exiled, and passed the rest of his life in Egypt. He died at Xois, south of Alexandria, in 538.

His activity, which was worthy of a better cause, recalls in some ways that of Athanasius. He had against him some of the most distinguished minds of the day, those of all parties whom his moderate and obstinate theory disconcerted more than the extravagances of others: Eutychians, like Sergius the Grammarian; Aphthartodocetes, followers of Julian of Halicarnassus; Orthodox, like the Palestinian monk Nephalius, and the bishops John the Grammarian and John of Scythopolis. To all these opponents, authors of learned works whose polemical titles are all that are known of them, Severus replied untiringly. He wrote two treatises *Against Nephalius;* a dialogue or *Philalethes* on Saint Cyril; *An Apology for the Philalethes*, and an enormous work, *Against John the Grammarian;* a *Refutation of Julian of Halicarnassus:* all these represent only

a portion of his works; there are also letters, sermons and hymns, all destined to maintain the theories of this unconquerable Patriarch. The originals of most of these works have disappeared, and it is only through Syriac translations that we know this gifted man, one of the strongest characters of a period saddened by many instances of failure and cowardice.

It is easy to understand that the Monophysite historians soon began to pay attention to Severus and set him up as a model for future generations. The Patriarch was still living when his friend, Zacharias Rhetor, wrote his life, a precious testimony to the writer's respect and admiration. This Zacharias, who had been a rhetorician before he became Bishop of Mitylene, is one of the good historians of the end of the fifth century. We owe to him a *History* of the period from 450 to 491, which relates the events from the Monophysite point of view, as well as some Biographies of some of the heroes of the sect: the monk Isaac, Peter of Iberia, and Theodore of Antinœ.

Exegetists.—Severus of Antioch is the last of the really talented men to be named. But we must go back a little to notice the names, at least, of some good workers who deserve to be known. After Theodoret exegesis languishes. He had already borrowed much from his predecessors, and his example is increasingly imitated. Writers now content themselves with copying other people's explanations, without taking the trouble to think for themselves.

It was thus that Victor of Antioch worked, an author known only by a Commentary on Saint

Mark, still extant, and one on Jeremias, extracts from which are to be found in the *Catenæ*. Both these works consist chiefly of extracts from former exegetists, and Saint John Chrysostom, whose writings have been chiefly employed, is not even mentioned by name.

Hesychius of Jerusalem, who lived during the first half of the fifth century, is, happily, more original. We owe to him two, and perhaps three Commentaries on the Psalms, on the Minor Prophets, Isaias and Daniel, and one on Leviticus, preserved in Latin. This learned man was interested in many subjects; he seems to have written an *Ecclesiastical History* of an anti-Nestorian tendency. He also published many sermons, and the specimens that remain enable us to appreciate his piety.

To a certain Hadrian, who quotes Cassiodorus, belongs an *Introduction to the Holy Scriptures*, the first work bearing a title that was often to be used later; and a priest of Coelesyria, named Theodulus, who lived under the reign of Zeno (474-491), wrote a work, *On the Consonance of the Divine Scriptures*, which clearly demonstrates the perfect harmony of the Old and New Testaments.

The best representative of the new method is Procopius of Gaza (about 465-528), an illustrious teacher of his time, who spent nearly all his life in his native town, and thence exercised a great influence on his contemporaries. He was an orator and letter-writer, and, in particular, an exegetist. He commented on the Octateuch, Isaias, Kings and Paralipomenon. Or, rather, he professed to comment on them, for, in fact, he contented himself with copying what had been said before him, and his great books are like in character to the *Catenæ*.

Theologians and Orators.—The Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Antioch in the fifth century possessed some theologians who do not seem to have had to occupy themselves with great Christological questions.

We only know the name of Nemesius of Emesa, but he is supposed to have written between 400 and 428. Under his name a book has come down to us that is one of the most often cited by Christian antiquity; a treatise *On the Nature of Man.* It is the first manual of anthropology written by a bishop, a book of philosophy and physiology combined, showing how man holds the middle position between the visible and invisible worlds, through his double nature. By the seventh century this book was already a classic, and Saint John Damascene copied long portions of it—without acknowledgment. In the eighth century it was translated into Armenian. In the ninth, the monk Meletius used the greater part of it for a work entitled *On the Constitution of Man.* In the eleventh century it was translated into Latin by Alfanus of Salerno, and again, a hundred years later, by Burgundio of Pisa. The great theologians of the Middle Ages often quoted this treatise of Nemesius, either by his own name or that of Saint Gregory of Nyssa.

Amongst orators Basil of Seleucia is better known by historians than in literature. After having upheld the cause of Dioscurus, for which he was deposed at Chalcedon, he ended by subscribing the "Tome" of Saint Leo, and died in orthodoxy about 458. Photius possessed fifteen Homilies by Basil, a Poem on Saint Thecla and some other writings. The Poem is not extant, but we have a

long prose account of the Saint's life and miracles which is probably his. Besides these there exist forty-four Homilies which the manuscripts attribute to him; many of these are certainly spurious. Those which are known to be Basil's are in a refined style of florid eloquence; the imagery is profuse, and the short, curt sentences characteristic of a school and period of decline.

Antipater of Bostra in Arabia is rather later than Basil. He wrote a treatise against Origenism and some homilies, of which only fragments have been preserved. During his lifetime he seems to have enjoyed a certain reputation in the See, formerly made illustrious by the exegetist, Titus.

Some homilies and panegyrics exist by Chrysippus of Jerusalem, procurator of the Laura, about 456, which were valued by the critics of the sixth century. We know little about them as they have not yet been much studied.

Hagiographers.—The Lives of the Saints are connected with the panegyrics: these had been long cultivated in the Church, but from the fifth century onwards, they became more and more popular. The *Lausiac History* of Palladius and the *Religious History* of Theodoret became the familiar companions of pious Christians, and all the great characters of ecclesiastical history thenceforth found their biographers. Mark the Deacon wrote a valuable life of Prophyrus of Gaza (395-420); a certain Anthony wrote the life of his master, Simeon Stylites, and an anonymous author soon followed his example. Another unknown writer composed a Life of Peter the Iberian, Bishop of Maïuma, one of the Monophysite saints (453-488), and Zacharias

Rhetor followed his example. It is in these biographies, rather than in the great Histories, that we find the testimonies of respect and admiration called forth in their contemporaries by the virtues of the monks and great bishops of the period.

The Pseudo-Areopagite.—We must conclude this history with an account of a series of pseudo-epigraphical writings. At the Conference which, about the end of 532 or beginning of 533, reunited the Catholics and Severians in Constantinople, the latter invoked in favour of their opinions, the authority of Dionysius the Areopagite. It is the first time that this name occurs in controversy. The Archbishop of Ephesus, Hypatius, declared that he could not accept it, as it was unknown to Saints Cyril and Athanasius, as to all others. The Bishop's criticism did not, however, prevent the works in question from spreading in orthodox circles. They were accepted in the sixth century by John and George of Scythopolis, and in the following one the detailed Commentary of Maximus Confessor did much to obtain their recognition.

These writings include four treatises and ten letters. The treatises are dedicated to a certain Timothy, supposed to be the disciple of Saint Paul and treat of *The Celestial Hierarchy; The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy; The Divine Names*, and *Mystical Theology*. The letters are addressed to a monk, Caius; to a deacon, Dorotheus; to a priest, Sopater; to the bishop, Polycarp; to the monk, Demophilus; to the bishop, Titus, and to the Theologian, John, Apostle and Evangelist, an exile on the Island of Patmos. They deal with the same subjects as those of the treatises. The author's

intention was to compose a complete course of mystical theology and to teach his readers the road to perfection, which consists in the vision of God. He writes in a deliberately obscure style, with strangely-turned words and phrases and extraordinary metaphors, evidently considering that when writing of such high mysteries, it is necessary to avoid simplicity of language and not to aim at being understood by everyone. However, the writings are not without merit; they inculcate a sure and prudent doctrine on contemplation and union with God, which justifies the success they have attained.

The writer's style betrays him. In spite of his endeavour to pass as Dionysius the Areopagite, the reading of a few pages shows that he was very familiar with the works of the neo-Platonists, whose expressions he constantly uses, and that he knew and utilized the writings of Proclus, a philosopher of the fifth century. He also alludes to the chanting of the Credo during Mass, which was introduced by the Monophysites of Antioch in 476, but was not adopted by the Catholics till later. Lastly, certain formulas which he uses to express the novel theories of the " theandric energy " in Christ, the care with which he avoids speaking of His " one " or " two " natures, lead one to think that the mysterious writer cannot have lived before the Emperor Zeno's *Henoticon* had been drawn up (482).

It must then have been between 482 and 532 that the *Pseudo-Areopagitica* were written. They can be dated even more exactly, for Severus of Antioch quotes them as far back as 532; therefore they must belong to the end of the fifth or the first years of the sixth century. Their country of origin was

probably Palestine, where they were first commented. These conclusions do not solve the mystery, but help to clear it. They were not arrived at till after much labour during the nineteenth century. Their real origin was very early lost sight of, and throughout the Middle Ages it was under the name of Saint Dionysius that they exercised a preponderating influence on the development of mystical theology. It is scarcely necessary to add that the intrinsic value of these writings is amply sufficient to authorize the credit they have enjoyed in the Church.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE THIRD PERIOD

We do not yet possess, at any rate in France, any complete studies of the great writers of the fifth century: Saint Cyril and Theodoret, in particular, still await their historian. Secondary writers have not been much better treated. This will explain the paucity of the Bibliographical indications here given.

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CONCLUSION

With the reign of Justinian a new era begins in the history of Greek Christian literature. Antiquity closes whilst the Byzantine Empire establishes itself on solid foundations that will last till the taking of Constantinople. Here, then, we may conclude our task and cast a glance backward on the long road that we have traversed.

During the first five centuries of its history, Christian literature learned to know itself. Born, as it were, of accidental circumstances, it grew after the same fashion, until the reconciliation of Church and State fully justified its existence. During the course of the fourth century it passed through a glorious period, but a brief one, as with all times of blossom. When Catholicism was no longer faced with the necessity of combating paganism or converting heretics; when she had at her service the power of the State, stronger and more to be feared than the eloquence of her preachers, she lost much of her vitality, and inspiration began to fail her writers. There was a general decline of language, style and taste, of all that could sustain a literature worthy of the name.

Until the end of the fourth, and perhaps down to the middle of the fifth century, great names and great works are not wanting. To-day one cannot

read without emotion the first attempts of that tongue and those thoughts which so quickly found their way to souls. Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, the Pseudo-Barnabas, Polycarp of Smyrna: the different provinces of the empire gave birth to these and such-like men, all animated by a common Faith. Their writings have none of the beauty of the classic masterpieces, for they are badly expressed and are scarcely compositions. But they transport the reader, for they are living.

Eighty or a hundred years pass away: Saint Irenæus, Hippolytus, Clement and Origen are distinguished men, whose works are true literature. They had already studied other books as well as the Bible; they knew the best works of Grecian antiquity. But we do not read and quote them because they imitate classic models, because they write in a supple and perfectly-formed tongue, but rather because they have put their whole souls into their books; we cannot open them without feeling their effect.

Saints Athanasius, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret of Cyrus, deserve no less praise. After them the fire seems to die out; in reality it is smouldering under the ashes, ready to burst out again, brighter than ever.

The influence of all these writers was enormous in the ancient world. Many of their works were translated into Latin, and thus they became the masters of Western thought. The works of Clement of Rome, the Doctrine of the Apostles, the Pastor of Hermas all had Latin editions by the second century; the originals were hardly published when the common faithful could read a translation,

whilst they could see on the walls of the Catacombs the symbolic Tower of which Hermas had explained the meaning. A little later the writings of Irenæus were treated in like manner, and it is remarkable that his great work against heresies should have found many readers amongst the people, whilst those of his contemporary, Saint Hippolytus, were reserved, in their Greek clothing, for the savants of Rome. It may have been that Hippolytus was too much of a philosopher, whilst Irenæus represented better the simple tradition of the Church.

It was chiefly at the end of the fourth century that the works of the Greek writers became known to the Latin world. Then, with incredible eagerness the latest novelties from Alexandria or Constantinople were seized upon. Saint Gregory Nazianzen had scarcely edited his sermons when they were known to Saint Ambrose of Milan, who utilized them in his own works. Nor was it considered sufficient to read living writers. The ancients must be studied, Origen in particular, whose Biblical commentaries and even his learned work on principles found both men and women eager readers amongst the Roman nobility. The activity of Rufinus and Saint Jerome could scarcely satisfy this insatiable curiosity. The beginning of the fifth century was scarcely less inquisitive; Saint John Chrysostom was very early known by the Roman literary world. It needed the barbarian invasions to render such relations less frequent, though they were never wholly interrupted.

The Roman was not the only world to feel the influence of the Greek Christian writings. They were nearly all translated into Syriac and Armenian;

many into Coptic, and later into Arabic, Ethiopian and Georgian. It was chiefly through the Christian books that the East learned to know Hellenism and received the impress of its character. To-day, indeed, the East gives us back what she received; how many of those ancient writings of the Greek Fathers are unknown to us otherwise than in Syriac, Armenian and Slavonic versions, the discoveries of which delight even the most hardened savants!

The readers of modern days are no strangers to this literature, though they have learnt and been influenced by it chiefly through Latin translations. Perhaps it is not the greatest writers who have exercised the most influence. Nemesius of Emesa and the Pseudo-Areopagite were more read and appreciated in the Middle Ages than Origen or Saint Basil. Nevertheless it is certain that Christian thought has always been directed by the Greeks: it is only those who view things superficially who can believe that we owe everything to the Latins and have forgotten our great Oriental ancestors.

It is not, therefore, simply for the satisfaction of curiosity that we have been studying Greek Christian literature. There we truly discover the Fathers—the Fathers of our faith and our thought. As we close these family archives, we can once more feel proud of our past; for it has been glorious and is still fruitful.